

Revelation



“Envisioning the End Times”

A Spiritual Journey

Ed Blankenship and Scott Blankenship

“Behold, I am coming soon!”

***My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone
according to what he has done.
I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the First and the Last,
the Beginning and the End.”
(Revelation 22:12-13)***

***Christ tells us He’s coming back and has
something for each of us. But what we get
depends on what we have done here on Earth.***

What will you get?

The book of Revelation is substantially different from all the other New Testament books. It is a prophecy, a vision if you will, of what the end times will be like. It shows not only the ultimate end of the world, but also the end result of all humanity. It’s kind of like a class where the teacher gives you the answers for the final on the first day of the class. You’re excited, but when you look, it seems like it’s in some sort of code!

This study will help you un-code this book - at least a little! And since our ultimate destiny depends on our own personal relationship with the One who’s coming back, included in this study are tools to help strengthen your daily walk with God – Having a daily Quiet Time with the Lord, a plan for reading God’s Word numerous times in your lifetime, how to pray and memorize Scripture, and setting some Spiritual Goals. Included are also ideas to make your small group more productive. **So learn the real key to unlocking this last book of the Bible! But please don’t wait. He warns us...He’s coming soon!**



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Revelation

Envisioning the End Times...

A Spiritual Journey

**Dedicated to Jesus,
*the Alpha and the Omega,
the first and the last,
the beginning...and the end!***

Some Studies in *The Transformation Series*

- *Reflections* – Spending Time With God
- *Excavations* – Digging Deep Into God's Word
- *Meditations* – Become a Person After God's Heart
- *Directions* – Moving Others Towards Christ
- *Prayer* – Talking with God
- *Philippians* – Rejoicing in Christ
- *James* – Living Out Your Faith

And a stand-alone 3-month journal, *Life's Log Book* –
Your Time with God

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Introduction

MY DREAM WITH THE DEVIL (Ed)

The book of Revelation is basically a vision about the Devil and Christ. I too had a dream about the devil early on in my life that changed my life. Here's how it all started. When I was in high school I got good grades, but in college I started to flunk out. I learned I really had to study. One night I was studying when there was a knock on my door. I opened it and two guys asked if I wanted to talk about Jesus Christ and Christianity. As I was tired of studying I invited them in!

They asked me what a real Christian was. I said, "A real Christian is someone who does good things and loves his neighbor." They then showed me Ephesians 2:8-9 that said, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." Well that definitely shot my idea out of the water, so I became even more interested and asked what they had to say. Before the night was over I asked Jesus to come into my life.

Well these guys got me into Bible study and taught me how to have a daily Quiet Time. They introduced me to other believers and I began to grow. They taught me to witness and memorize God's Word which really helped me.

But then one day, I "balked". They asked me to also begin a reading program to go through the Bible in a year. I said I was too busy, I was in the Word enough. Well that night I had a dream that I was sleeping and then I woke up in that dream. At the time I didn't know if I was actually awake or not. At the foot of my bed was the devil. He asked, "How are you doing, Ed?" Nervously, I said, "OK." Then he said he had heard I was reading the Bible. I was about to tell him that no, I had decided not to do that, but I saw my Bible on my night stand so I picked it up and held it in front of me

and said, “Oh, do you mean this?” Well when he saw my Bible he screamed, ran into the corner, shrank down to nothing, and vanished. Then I woke up for real. Wow, what a dream! It still makes me shake! Well, I decided right then and there that I needed to get into His Word as much as I could. Satan hates God’s Word - because it defeats him! I’m still trying to get into God’s Word as much as I can. And as a result God has changed my life. We pray for you, the same!

Prophetic Literature – A Vision!

Many things in the Bible are to be taken literally: Jesus was born of a virgin, He died, He was raised from the dead, and He is coming back, for example. But other things are from prophetic literature and are to be taken figuratively: the seven lamp stands representing the seven churches in Revelation, or the seven stars representing their angels for example. Sometimes it’s hard to know which it is unless it is so stated. Revelation is a vision of the future. All visions are not 100% clear until they happen. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror...”

So what are we to do with this book?

1. Don’t get too literal with it. We speculate a bit on the number “666”, but don’t lose much sleep over it.

2. Look for application for your life. In the end times people will be in turmoil, but that also happens today. Can you meet people’s needs now?

3. Look for broad themes. Jesus is coming back. Christ will conquer Satan. The devil is active in the world. Christians will be persecuted. Learn these from this study.

4. Remember people without Christ have a very different future in store for them than those who have Christ. Who do you know that needs Him? Tell them before it’s too late for them. I once heard the true story of a guy who was a college student and worked part-time at a mortuary. He was a Christian and one day while studying at the library for a test he felt an urging that he talk about

Christ to the student at the next table. But he needed to study and so he tried to forget about it. But the urging got so strong he had to leave the library and study at home. The next day he took his test and then went to his job and found out that someone had died the night before. To his horror it was the student he had felt he should share Christ with!

Yes, we never know how long someone might have and everyone needs Christ. We are placed strategically so others can learn of Him. Share the gospel (and your love) with them if they don't know Christ. The book of Revelation is placed in the Bible to urge us to do so. And it may help move others along in the process towards Christ too! So share some of this with others as well.

Study Purpose and Suggested Use

God gives us His Word including the book of Revelation in order to change our lives. But a changed life takes time. So in this study, along with going through the entire book of Revelation and uncovering some of its secrets, we also teach a concept called a daily Quiet Time, or Devotional Time as often called. Spending time with God daily is foundational to life change, and to understanding His Word. The more we meet with Him, the clearer His Word will become. During this study you will share Quiet Time thoughts with each other weekly. We also have a Goals page which allows you to tailor the study to meet your own needs. The purpose of this is to include some accountability which we all need and insure that the concepts we learn are those we practice.

All the lessons in this study are on the book of Revelation and there are practical applications throughout. This study is intended for small group use, with each member having his or her own copy. The Bible lessons are meant to be filled out before the group meets, particularly after week 1. The lessons are somewhat difficult, and will require at least an hour each week as homework. This study is also a journal designed to be used for 10-15 minutes on a daily basis. Revelation is a hard book to understand. Our hope and prayer is that God will show you key insights from His

Word that we could never begin to teach you. As you go through this may you meet with God daily and also have the blessing of having the eyes of your heart enlightened through this book!

For the Small Group Leader

Thanks for leading this study on Revelation in your small group! Revelation is a difficult book to understand, but when we get into it, God will open our eyes. Deuteronomy 29:29 says that the secret things belong to God. Well Revelation is one of those secret things. But the book says we will be blessed as we get into it. So pray that those in your group, including you, will get blessings from your study of this book. Yes, spend LOTS of time in prayer!

We also encourage you to model what is being taught by doing the lessons ahead of time and then applying them to your life. This is particularly important as far as the Quiet Time is concerned. In week 1 you will share what meeting with God regularly has meant to you. Even if you have had a Quiet Time regularly, we encourage you to do the practice Quiet Time in week 1 ahead of time and use the Journal Pages for 2 weeks to personally see the benefits before you teach it. Each week, there is material that is to be read. It is best if this is read aloud by group members (rather than by the leader), going around the room and letting each person read a paragraph aloud, in sequence. This helps all to share.

Each week group members will share something they have written in their Journal. This is not to be rushed. In week 1, during the practice session have everyone share as time permits. In subsequent weeks, ask for volunteers, and encourage them in what they have written down, encouraging all to share. It is recommended that members choose their own book in the Bible to read rather than assigning specific devotional readings. This provides better sharing. Encourage people to get a paperback New Testament or Bible for their Quiet Times so they will mark in it.

The Goals Page is a measure of accountability to encourage members to complete assignments and grow. Allow time for folks to share their accomplished goals and get them initialed off. As the leader, add a note of encouragement! They've earned it!

WEEK 1

Get acquainted with each other and then open in prayer

Ask, Why did you want to study the book of Revelation?

Read the Introduction on When the Man Comes Around

Together complete the Chapter 1 study writing down answers

Leader share about his or her Quiet Time

Read the material on Personal Worship (“Quiet Time”)

Practice having a Quiet Time

Share practice Quiet Time writings

Have someone read assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

Study Introduction – When the Man Comes Around

I (Scott) really like Johnny Cash – his rough life, his solid faith in God, his great guitar playing and singing. One of his songs is “When the Man Comes Around”. It is a song about Jesus’ return. The reason I like it is it brings to our attention that the only thing that matters is the fact that Jesus is coming back. There are many different questions and interpretations about the book of Revelation: When will these things occur? Who is the Beast? When is the Rapture? When is the Millennial Kingdom? And there are many others... We’ll talk about these during this study, with some understanding, but still there will be many outstanding questions when we end. That’s just the book of Revelation.

But one thing we know for certain is Jesus is coming back. Everything else pales in comparison. “When the Man comes around” is all that really matters! If you get that from this study, then you’ve gotten the main point!

Here is an outline for the book before we get started:

Introduction (Chapter 1)

Letters to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2-3)

Heaven (Chapters 4-5)

God’s Wrath (Chapters 6-11)

The Battle with Evil (Chapters 12-16)

The Woman and the Dragon (Chapter 12)

The Beasts (Chapter 13)

The Lamb (Chapter 14)
The Harvest (Chapter 15)
Seven Bowls of Plagues (Chapter 16)
Defeat of Evil (Chapters 17-20)
The Great Prostitute (Chapter 17)
The Fall of Babylon (Chapter 18)
Victory in Heaven (Chapter 19)
The Millennium (Chapter 20)
Forever with Christ (Chapters 21-22)

Along with the book of Revelation itself we'll look at some interesting ways to deepen our walk with God as we study. Our prayer is that while you go through this study you'll truly experience "The Man" who is coming around!

Revelation Chapter 1, Introduction

Why This Book? (Revelation 1:1-8)

1. Who does Revelation 1:1 say this book is from?
How did it get here and who was involved? Rev. 1:1-2

2. This book starts with a blessing. What is it? Rev. 1:3

To read, listen to, and obey a book such as this requires a mindset. Ezra7:10 says it like this, "For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel." What mindset do you think you should have going into Revelation?

3. This letter was originally to seven churches, but is now for all of us as well. It starts with God's blessing. How does Revelation 1:4 say this?

4. What things does the first chapter tell us is already true about Christ? Revelation 1:5-6

5. Then Revelation 1:7-8 summarizes in two verses the entire book what will happen to Christ. What is it?

The Vision (Revelation 1:9-20)

6. John then tells how he got this book. What does Revelation 1:9-11 say?

7. Revelation 1:12-16 then describes the vision of the person John saw. **What was he like?** (Fill in below)

There were seven _____ lamp-stands

In the middle _____

He wore:

His head and hair:

His eyes:

His feet:

His voice:

He held:

From his mouth came:

His face:

What do you think is significant in how this person looked?

8. Who do you think this man is? See Revelation 1:17-18 (See also 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

9. Jesus then tells John to write this all down. And he also explains some of the symbolism in Revelation 1:19-20.

Seven Stars equals _____

Seven Lamp-stands equals _____

Chapter 1 of Revelation sets the tone for the whole book. It shows us what is to come. It is a book from Jesus, the Lamb. It will use symbolism. We are blessed as we read it (as well as the whole Bible). That's quite a bit from the last book in the Bible!

Personal Worship (“Quiet Time”)

Being a disciple first involves being a follower of His! That certainly begins by coming to know Jesus personally through salvation. Inviting Christ into your heart and receiving God's gift of salvation is the start of a wonderful experience, here and in eternity!

But it shouldn't just stop there. God wants us to grow in our knowledge and love for Him each day. But how does a believer do this? The answer is simple - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:8a. "Drawing near to God" involves daily meeting Him, talking with Him, and He with you. As we do this, we begin to build a deeper and deeper relationship with Him, the most important relationship of all. One key habit that can help build this deeper relationship with God is having a daily "quiet time", or a daily "devotional" as it is sometimes called. This is a time of Bible reading and prayer where you quiet your heart before God and listen to Him through His Word and then also commune (or talk) with Him in prayer. It doesn't have to be long, maybe just 5 to 10 minutes at first, but it is a time you will soon find grows and means more and more to you each day!

WHY HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME?

First, God desires to meet with you daily! He died on the cross to make that a possibility. Each and every day, He is interested in your life, and having a daily quiet time is a wonderful way to commune with Christ. (Zephaniah 3:17 and Revelation 3:20)

Secondly, you need a daily quiet time. By doing so, you will get to know Jesus better. It will enrich your day. God will use it for cleansing and to guide you in everyday decisions. It will help in all areas of your life. (Luke 10:38-42)

Third, it will give you something to share with others. A passage you read today may be just what someone else needs to hear. Keeping a journal is an excellent way to have those thoughts from God available to you for others' needs. (Colossians 3:16, 1 John 1:3, and 2 Timothy 2:2)

HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME.

While there are many ways to have a quiet time with God, here is one that can often work best to get you started.

1. Find a quiet place, apart from distractions, where you can be alone. Many find the morning to be the best time. (Fill in below):

My Quiet Time will be at _____ (am/pm). Place: _____

2. Pray, telling God you love Him, and ask for wisdom and for Him to speak to your heart. Also thank Him, and confess any sin that comes to your mind. (James 1:5 and 1 John 1:9)

3. Read a passage in the Bible. Start with a chapter, perhaps in the New Testament, particularly if the quiet time is a new concept. As you read, underline verses that stand out to you. **Many prefer a modern paperback Bible for their quiet time so they feel "more free" to underline in it. I encourage you to use one.** (I will use this modern paperback version: _____.)

4. When completed reading, go back and review the verses you underlined. Pick one underlined verse that impresses you. Fill out a journal entry on it. For the appropriate day, write down in a journal what you read in the Bible, what verse stood out to you the most, what that verse said (paraphrase it or put down what it said verbatim), how it impressed you, and your response.

An Example, Here is part of Philippians 1 and how I (Ed) marked it:

21. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24. but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26. so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Based on marking the above, I choose verse 25 as the verse that stood out most to me and then filled out the below journal entry:

◇ **Monday:** Date: 12/4/09 What I read: Philippians 1 Best Verse: 25
What it said: Paul lived so he can help others grow and experience the joy of salvation.
How it impressed me: He was focused on helping people grow more mature in their faith.
My response: Lord, help me (and use me) to help others grow and experience You daily!

5. After completing your journal entry, talk to God in prayer about this verse, how it impacts you, and how you want to respond as a result of it. Then go on to pray about other items from your daily prayer list(s).

Practice Having a Quiet Time

Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the practice journal entry that follows:

Birthday is from January 1 – June 30

1 Thessalonians 1 (from the NIV)

1. Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. 2. We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 3. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5. because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9. for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10. and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Practice Journal Entry

◇ **Today:** Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the sample journal entry that follows:

Birthday is from July 1 – December 31

1 John 1

1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4. We write this to make our joy complete. 5. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (NIV)

Practice Journal Entry

◇ **Today:** Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

One Final, Yet Most Important Word Before We Go Further

This is a guide on the book of Revelation in the Bible. Jesus says in John 5:39-40, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life”. This Scripture points out that we don’t just want to know the Bible, the real goal is to know God Himself! So let us ask you a few questions: Have you realized that God has a wonderful plan for your life, but that we are all separated from God and His plan because of our sin? Have you been convicted of that sin and are you willing with God’s help to turn from it? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for those things and to give you the gift of eternal life? Have you asked Him to come into your life, take away your sins, and give you the gift of eternal life? Turning your life over to Christ is the only way to really understand His Word, particularly this book! That is our prayer – that you truly know Him!

Assignment for next week

1. Get a paperback Bible or New Testament in a version you prefer and begin reading in it daily wherever you like. You have just read an entire chapter of one of the books of the Bible during our practice time. You may want to continue in the same book by reading the next chapter in that book. The book of John is also a good place to start if the Bible is new to you. (John wrote the book of Revelation.) Note that the Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". Use the table of contents in your Bible or New Testament to find a particular “book”. Each day, underline what stands out to you, pick one underlined verse and complete a journal record. Be ready to share at least one journal entry next week.

2. Answer the questions for next week and read the corresponding verses/chapters. Remember that the more you put into this study, the more you will get out of it. Don’t think that you’ll understand everything in what you read, but do prayerfully see what you can get out of it. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to grasp.

WEEK 2

Get further acquainted and then open in prayer

Time for Group Members to share from their Quiet Time

Read the material on Using Your Bible

Discuss Lesson 2 – Rev. 2-3, Letters to the Seven Churches

Read Standing at the Door - Revelations 3:20

Have someone read the assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

Using Your Bible

The Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". The table of contents in your Bible should be used to help you locate the individual "books" of the Bible. Note that some book titles are very similar, such as the book of John, the book of 1 John, the book of 2 John, and finally the book of 3 John. If a verse you look up doesn't make sense, you may be in the wrong Bible book!

The references to Bible passages in this study are in the traditional manner - by book, chapter, and verse. Example - John 3:16 refers to the book of John in the Bible, chapter 3, the 16th verse. Sometimes a verse reference may indicate "a" or "b" afterwards, indicating either the first half or the second half of a verse. It is also helpful to read the context (the verses before and after) as well. Finally, if you encounter difficulty in answering a particular question, try reading the verse in another translation.

It is helpful to have a separate Bible for Bible study in addition to the paperback Bible or New Testament used for your Quiet Time. Bibles are available in any book, department, or discount store. They are also available online (see Bible Gateway.com). Note that there are major differences in the language used by different versions of the Bible sold today. While all English Bibles were translated from the original Greek and Hebrew texts, some versions (e.g. the King James Version) were translated in the 1600s and use old English. Others were translated recently and use modern English. Make sure you use a Bible you can fully understand for your Bible study as well as for your Quiet Time.

LESSON 2 - Revelation chapters 2-3, Letters to Seven Churches

This portion of Revelation is letters from Christ to seven churches in what is now Turkey. Why they were chosen is unknown, but some believe they depict church history. These letters give encouragement and admonishing that we can all benefit from today.

1. To the church at **Ephesus** (Revelation 2:1-7)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (vs. 1)

What does he say about them positively? (2-3, 6)

Negatively? (4-5)

What does he tell them to do? (5)

Why? (5)

What does he say to us as readers? (7)

What was your love like when you first became a Christian?

How about now?

2. To the church at **Smyrna** (Revelation 2:8-11)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (8)

What does he say to encourage them? (9-10a)

What does he tell them to do? (10b)

Why? (10c)

What does he say to us as readers? (11)

3. To the church at **Pergamum** (Revelation 2:12-17)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (12)

What is His sword? (See Hebrews 4:12)

What does he say about them positively? (13)

Negatively? (14-15)

What does he tell them to do? (16)

Why should we be obedient to His Spirit and His Word? (17)

4. To the church at **Thyatira** (Revelation 2:18-29)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (18)

What does that mean, do you think?

What does he say about them positively? (19)

Negatively? (20-21)

What will Christ do and why? (22-23)

What does he ask of them? (24-25)

Why? (26-28)

5. To the church at **Sardis** (Revelation 3:1-6)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (1a)

What does he say about them negatively? (1b)

What should they do? (2-3)

Positively? (4-5)

6. To the church at **Philadelphia** (Revelation 3:7-13)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (7)

What does he say about them positively? (8&10)

What does Christ promise to do? (9-12)

7. To the church at **Laodicea** (Revelation 3:14-22)

What does this letter tell us about Christ? (14)

What does he say about them negatively? (15, 17, 19)

What does he tell them to do? (18-19)

What does He promise to those who hear His voice and open the door of their heart to Him? (20-21)

How can you best hear His voice?

8. What can you learn from these letters?

Respond back to God about something He spoke to you from these letters. Write it as a short letter below:

Dear Jesus,

In Your Name...Amen

Standing at the Door - Revelation 3:20

In Revelation 3:20, Jesus says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.”

If you’ve asked Christ into your life you know exactly what that means. When I did that He changed me. He became real to me. The Bible became real to me. Prayer became real to me. But if you haven’t asked Christ into your life, you don’t know what Jesus is talking about. He isn’t in your life yet.

Think of this verse as Jesus knocking on the door to your heart. He is a gentlemen, He won’t barge in. If you’ve sensed something, that is Him knocking. The question is, are you ready for Him? Is He welcome to come into your heart and life?



He is waiting for you to open the door to your heart and life and invite Him in. How do you do that? You do it through prayer. When you invite

Have you put the welcome mat out for Jesus?

someone into your house you ask them to come in. You can do that with Jesus too. You talk with Him in prayer. You can pray something like this: **"Lord Jesus, I know I have done things wrong and I am sorry. I ask that you help me to turn from those things. I ask Jesus to come into my heart and life and save me. Amen."** If this was the prayer of your heart you have Jesus' assurance that he is in your life right now. He has walked through the door to your life and heart! You are connected to Him for all eternity!

Once you've asked Christ into your life God gives you certain promises. One is that you have eternal life right now. 1 John 5:11-13 says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." So once Jesus is in your life, you also have eternal life. Not because you are good, but because eternal life is in Jesus. It comes with him.

Before we receive Jesus Christ we are separated from God because of the things we do wrong. Afterwards, things have changed. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We may still do things wrong, but with Christ in our life, God views us differently now. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" God promises that when Jesus comes into our life He begins to change us into a new and better person. This takes time and we can "speed up the process" or "slow it down" by cooperating or not cooperating with Him. Part of that is good works. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." God made us to do good. It should be the result of our salvation. Praise God! When Jesus comes into our life He makes us truly new – inside and out!

We also can help Jesus “grow us spiritually” by meeting with Him daily. In a sense, He is knocking on the “door of our day”, wanting to spend time with us. The question is will you open the door for Him today, spend time with Him, and let Him be more a part of it, or will He in a sense be left outside? Will you be like Martha in Luke 10:38-42 and be busy doing other things? Or will you be like her sister Mary and spend some time listening to Jesus today? Let’s encourage each other to be like Mary and spend time with Him, getting into His Word and praying daily. Who knows, He might have something special He wants to say!

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least two entries from your journal next week.
2. Complete your Bible study for next time. Also read about “God’s Bowl”. You will get much more out of the lesson if you complete the Bible study for next week ahead of time, using your Bible to look up the verses and then write down your answers to the questions. Remember Matthew 4:4 that we need His Word more than our physical food. Spending time in devotions (quiet time), and Bible study during the week will help keep you spiritually well fed. Don’t be an anemic Christian.
3. On page 50, there is a Bible Reading Plan called “10X!” This plan breaks up the Bible into natural segments: History, Wisdom, Prophecy, Instruction, etc. and intersperses the Old with the New. The gospels are spread out as well. The plan is called “10X!” because the intent is for every Christian to read their Bible at least ten times during his or her life. We have found that each time we read it we see something new, so multiple readings makes a lot of sense. Reading one chapter a day takes three years to finish, so ten times is thirty years. That’s certainly doable if you are in your 20s, 30s, or even 40s. Make reading the Bible be a life-long goal!

WEEK 3

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Read the material on Using a Prayer List

Discuss the Lesson

Read and discuss the material on Setting Goals

Have someone read the assignment for next week

Close in Prayer

Using a Prayer List

Many Christians use prayer lists to help them be more consistent in their prayer life. In the back you will find several prayer pages that have a column for specific prayer request and another for God's answer. (There is also some space for prayer items on each weekly Journal Page.) It helps to be specific in your prayers as much as possible. For example if some friends you know are going through a difficult time, in addition to just saying, "God, I pray for Bill and Sue", also ask that "God, please provide a job and finances for Bill and Sue." This will help you see specific answers.

Remember that God can answer in 3 ways – Yes, No, or Wait. If he answers No or Wait, he is not trying to be mean, but knows that this isn't either the best thing or not the right time. Keep praying and be consistent in your prayers and God will bless you with many wonderful answers to prayer. (Colossians 4:2)

LESSON 3 - Revelation chs. 4-5, Heaven

Back in heaven, these chapters show what is happening. True worship is taking place.

Worshipping God (Revelation 4)

1. John is invited to heaven in Revelation 4:1. Who invites him and why?

2. John then sees God sitting on His throne. What is He like? Revelation 4:3

3. What and who was around God's throne? Revelation 4:4

4. What came from the throne and was in front of it? Revelation 4:5-6a

5. There were four very unusual creatures around the throne. Describe them from Revelation 4:6-8a.

6. What did these creatures say? Revelation 4:8b

7. When this happened what did the elders do? Rev. 4:9-10

8. What is the significance of them casting their crowns before God do you think?

9. What did the elders say? Revelation 4:11

The elders and living beings praise God 24/7. How worshipful are you throughout your day? Let's all learn from them!

The Lamb and the Scroll (Revelation 5)

10. A question is asked in heaven in Revelation 5:2-4 about a scroll. What is it and what was the apparent response?

11. John was wrong, however. Someone was able to open the scroll. Who was it? Revelation 5:5-6

12. Jesus takes the scroll and what do the four living creatures and 24 elders do? (Revelation 5:7-9)

What was their song? Revelation 5:9-10

13. A million angels join in. What's their song? Rev.5:11-12

Angels are seen throughout Revelation.

They represent churches, they sing, they announce God's decrees. They hold back the winds, they worship God, they carry the prayers of the saints (believers). They blow trumpets, fight for God, they fly, they carry the good news. Look for angels as you go through this most interesting book.

Filling Up God's Bowl! (Ed)

Revelation 5:8 is an interesting verse in that it says the four living creatures and the 24 elders had gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God's people. I've never been into incense, but I do know it smells.

The fact that God's incense is prayers is deep. But I thought that I had caught the concept. God must like that smell. He likes it when we pray. Yes, I had learned what needed to be learned from that verse. Or so I thought.

In 2011, I was in Florida with my daughter and her children. We saw the last Space Shuttle go off. It was awesome! (As a result we are now shooting off model rockets with all our grandkids.) The next day I was having a quiet time in the hotel room and I thought I'd get the kids into it. Well it so happens that I was reading Revelation 5 and I thought to myself that this would be a hard chapter for the kids. But I decided to go ahead and read it to them anyway. Maybe they might catch something from it.

So I read the chapter, and commented a bit on the prayers in the chapter and then when I was done I said, "OK kids, now let's pray." I knew they could do that! Just then my four year old grand-daughter said real excitedly, "We can fill up God's bowl, Pa-Pa!" I thought, wow, that's cool, she did catch something after all. The incense was prayer, so we prayed and those little ones truly filled God's bowl that day! But ever since that day, I've been thinking more on what Revelation 5:8 says, and what God was saying to me through my grand-daughter about filling up God's bowl. I've been asking myself some questions:

- Do I pray enough, or are my prayers just a drop in the bucket in God's Bowl?
- What type of prayers have I been putting in God's Bowl – selfish prayers, or prayers for others?

- Are my prayers of lasting spiritual value, or are they something that will burn up very quickly?
- How do my prayers “smell” to God? Is He really pleased with them?

I sure don’t want to go overboard on this, but since that day, God has been telling me I need to focus more on my prayer life. I need to pray for others – for their salvation, for their healing, for their future. I also need to spend some extended time with God in prayer and make it as important to me as my Bible reading and study.

Yes prayer is important to God, it should be important to us! We all need to be more diligent in praying and let the Lord get a good whiff of our prayers! Let’s follow my granddaughter’s counsel and “Fill up God’s Bowl” to overflowing!

Things to Pray for. Use the acronym A-C-T-S to guide your prayers:

Adoration – Tell God how great He is. (His majesty, greatness, power, love, kindness, purity, faithfulness...)

Confession – Tell Him how you’ve strayed from Him. (Any sins that come to mind, any doubts...)

Thanksgiving – Tell Him what you’re thankful for. (Your family, friends, job, salvation, health...)

Supplication - Pray for your needs and for others. (Your health, salvation, guidance, peace, trust...)

Setting Goals

We set goals in many areas of life. It may be to get a new job, to save for a down payment on a house, to start a family, to lose 10 pounds, to start college, etc. It is often helpful to set goals in the Christian life as well. During this study we have made it a priority to have daily Quiet Times, to read the Bible, to do Bible study, and regularly attend small group. Hebrews 10:24 says, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” And Proverbs 27:17 says, “Iron sharpens iron and one person sharpens

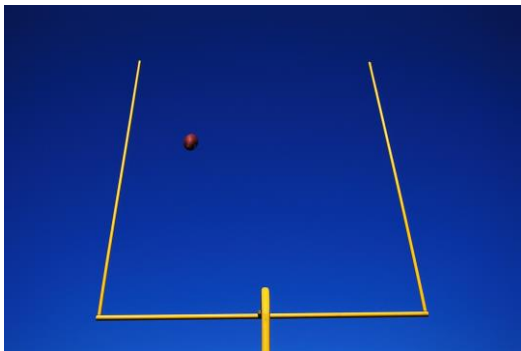
another.” We want to be an encouragement and help to each other. Part of that is to set some goals and help each other achieve them.

In the back of this study you can use page 79 to set spiritual goals for this quarter, semester, or some other period. A Quiet Time goal is already given of 7 consecutive days. Note that it may take several attempts to get 7 days in a row, but that is OK, for as you continue to try and eventually succeed your walk with God will be greatly strengthened. In future journals you may want to increase the number of consecutive days as experience has shown it takes 21 days to form a new habit. So moving up to 14 and eventually 21 consecutive days can help build this habit into your walk with God for a lifetime. Just remember that the ultimate goal is spending time with God, not some legalistic number of days.

Another goal that is also given is to pray for understanding of the book of Revelation. Then a third goal is given to actually read the entire book of Revelation.

You can add your own goals if you like. A goal you might add would be to write a letter to your pastor to encourage him in his ministry. Or perhaps to start a Bible reading program as shown on page 50. Or to get involved in some sort of Disaster Relief effort. It could also be to read certain books of the New Testament, or even the entire New Testament. It could be to complete all the questions in the Bible study lessons or to memorize a verse from each of the studies. It could also be to pray for a specific person or for something specific to happen. Another goal could be to bring someone to church, or to get involved in a specific ministry. It is sometimes good to set long-term goals, but to begin we recommend setting goals you can achieve in one to three months. This helps make your goals more achievable and help build on success. As Proverbs 13:19 says, “A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.” During the rest of this study we will be weekly checking each other on our progress towards meeting our goals. And your group leader may also want to see your progress and write a specific note of encouragement about the growth evidenced in your walk with God during this study. Prayerfully consider

what goals you should set and work towards achieving them. Remember, goals are not an end in themselves, but are an aid to help each of us grow to spiritual maturity.



Set Goals for Yourself to Grow Spiritually!

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.
2. Put some items on your prayer list. Use these to help be more specific and consistent in your prayers. Pray these requests **AFTER** you have responded back to God about what he has impressed on your heart during your Quiet Time.
3. Complete the lesson for next week including “Trusting God”. Read the questions, look up the verses, and write down your answers. Adults learn best by discovering for themselves rather than simply being told. Taking the time to answer the questions will allow you to learn key truths on your own and then be able to share them with others. This will be not only your own opinion, but also the knowledge you gain from the Word. The more you put into your study, the more you’ll get out of it. 2 Timothy 2:15 says “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved...correctly handling the word of truth.”
4. Look over the Goals in the back and prayerfully consider what additional goals God would have you set for this next month.

WEEK 4

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share an item from your prayer lists. Pray in your group.

Share Goals you have set for yourself with your group

Read the material on Keeping Track of What You Read

Discuss the Lesson

Read and Discuss Trusting God

Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer

Keeping Track of What You Read

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly. This is true both for encouragement and for guidance. Psalm 119:9 says that a person should guard his (or her) life according to God's Word. But to do so you must be in The Book, it's not enough just to have it in your house! The more you get into the Bible the more God can show you His will. The New Testament is an excellent place to start reading. Some people like to keep track of where they read to record their progress. Use the chart (page 78) near the back of this study to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. This chart lists every book of the New Testament and every chapter number. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them. Our prayer is that this will encourage you to read through the entire New Testament. You should be able to do so in about 9 months if you read 1 chapter daily. Then you can read it again, or go on to the Old Testament. 3 chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in about a year.

LESSON 4 – Chapters 6-11 God's Wrath

These chapters highlight much suffering that will occur because of sin. But it also shows those who belong to Him. Some from this earth, and some from heaven itself.

1. Six of the Seven Seals are broken by the Lamb in the 6th chapter of Revelation. Write down below what are the results for each:

1st Seal Revelation 6:1-2?

(This shows God is mighty in battle.)

2nd Seal Revelation 6:3-4?

(This shows peace is fleeting)

3rd Seal Revelation 6:5-6?

(This shows economies in turmoil)

4th Seal Revelation 6:7-8?

(This shows humans are mortal.)

5th Seal Revelation 6:9-11?

(This shows God cares for His people.)

6th Seal Revelation 6:12-14?

(This shows God is sovereign over all creation.)

2. What do the people do as a result of all this? Rev. 6:15-17

3. God is concerned about His people. What does Revelation 7:1-3 say God wants to do?

4. God marks His people to save them from destruction. What do you think is significant in who were marked? Revelation 7:4-8

5. Rev. 7:9-17 also highlights a great crowd of worshippers. Where were they from? Revelation 7:9

What did they and the angels do? Revelation 7:10-12

Who were these multitudes? Revelation 7:13-14

What will God do for them? Revelation 7:15-17

Think of it. To never again be hungry or thirsty. To never be hot or cold. To never be sick. To have the lamb as their Shepherd. To drink freely from God's life-giving water, and to have every tear wiped from their eyes. Won't that be wonderful! Stop now and praise God for what He will do!

6. Finally, the 7th Seal. What happens? Rev 8:1-2

7. This seems very anticlimactic doesn't it? Yet sometimes we need silence to focus in on what is important. In the Old Testament, Elijah heard God in a still-small voice. Here what happens next? Revelation 8:3-4

Again, as in the last lesson, think about the fact that your prayers are a part of Revelation. Write down below some things you can and should pray for?

Salvation for _____

Relief for/from _____

Strength for _____

Wisdom for _____

Healing for/from _____

Spend some time in your group praying for these.

The angel fills the incense burner, hurling it down to earth.

8. Now there are seven angels with seven trumpets. What happens with the first four of these? Write it down:

1st Trumpet Revelation 8:7?

2nd Trumpet Revelation 8:8-9?

3rd Trumpet Revelation 8:10-11?

4th Trumpet Revelation 8:12?

A lone eagle then gives a warning. What is it? Rev. 8:13

9. Here come the other trumpets. Write down what happens:
5th Trumpet Revelation 9:1-6?

These were unusual locusts. Describe them. Rev. 9:7-11

6th Trumpet Revelation 9:13-19?

Did the people repent? Revelation 9:20-21

10. Then there are “seven thunders”. The seven thunders say something. What is it? Revelation 10:4

God has secrets, but He says that the things He has revealed belong to us so that we will obey them (See Deuteronomy 29:29). The responsibility to follow His Word is ours, but we must get in it so we can know it. That’s our responsibility too. The rest of chapter 10 seems almost symbolic. One of the weirdest things is the “small scroll”. What happens when John is told to eat it? Revelation 10:8-10

11. There are two prophets in the first half of Revelation 11. John measures the Temple where the two prophets or witnesses will minister for a few weeks less than the 3 ½ years the nations will defile the Temple (see Revelation 11:2-3). What do these two witnesses do? Revelation 11:5-6

12. In Revelation 11:7 a “beast” appears. What does he do?

What happens to these two witnesses next? Rev. 11:8-10

God then does a miracle. What is it and how did it affect people? Revelation 11:11-14

13. Finally we come to the 7th Trumpet. Write a couple word summary of what happens when it is blown:

7th Trumpet Revelation 11:15-19

This passage summarizes what will soon take place:

- God assumes power and begins to reign.
- God’s wrath comes.
- Time to judge the dead.
- Time to reward God’s servants, the prophets.
- Time to reward God’s holy people.

- Time to reward all who fear (reverence) God's name.
- Time to destroy all who caused destruction on the earth.
- IN heaven, lightning flashes, thunder, earthquake...hail!

These chapters are very hard to fathom. The devastation is so complete. Yet God's people are obvious and bring praise to God. Everything He does should bring His people to praise!

Trusting God

It's normal to be frightened by much of what happens in Revelation. It shows basically the ultimate battle of good versus evil, God versus Satan. But as Christians we can trust God. Romans 8:28 says "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." And 1 John 4:4 says "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." We know who will ultimately win these final battles – God! But many people will suffer and die along the way, Christians included. Many believe the Church will be raptured (taken away from the earth) before all this takes place, but there are differing viewpoints on when that will occur. (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.) Regardless of when the Church is raptured, there will undoubtedly be people becoming Christians during that period. So either way, some Christians will go through what is in Revelation. Both to them and to us, God gives certain promises for comfort. On your own pick out a promise and memorize it. Use it to encourage you as you go through hard times. (The last page in this study gives hints on how to memorize and keep a verse in your memory such as these:

- **Isaiah 41:10** - So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

- **Lamentations 3:22-23** - Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- **1 Peter 5:7** - Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.
- **Colossians 1:11** - being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,
- **John 14:27** - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
- **Psalms 117:2** - For great is his love toward us, and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever...
- **Ephesians 6:10-11** - Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil...
- **James 1:2-4** - Consider it pure joy...whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
- **1 Peter 4:12-13** - Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.
- **Proverbs 29:25** - ...whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.
- **Psalms 73:23-24** - Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory.
- **Nahum 1:7** - The LORD is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him,
- **Isaiah 33:6** - He will be the sure foundation for your times...

- **Psalm 56:4** - In God I trust and am not afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?
- **Psalm 34:17** - The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles...
- **Isaiah 43:1-2** - Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.
- **Psalm 118:5-6** - When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD...The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?
- **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** – For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

So know that God is just, God is good, God is faithful, God is strong, and He comes to rescue! Yes, you can trust Him!

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also keep praying for the people on your prayer list daily.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Next week, during the Bible study portion we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for members to share answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Maybe it's having a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, or completing all the questions in the Bible studies. Maybe it's praying for a specific person. Maybe it's being a friend to someone. Whatever it is, seeing God work to help you accomplish it will be an encouragement to you and to others in your group.

WEEK 5

Open in prayer

Ask Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share progress on your Goals

Discuss the Lesson

Discuss the East Coast Earthquake

Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer

LESSON 5 – Rev.12-16 The Battle with Evil

In this lesson there is a lot of imagery. Sometimes it's hard to know what they mean. Study this with an open mind, asking God for wisdom to get out of it what He would have you learn.

The Woman and the Dragon (Revelation 12)

1. Revelation 12 seems to be very figurative and appears to be a summary of all history. Two important events are the birth of a child to a woman and the red dragon. Who do you think the woman might be and who could her child have been? Revelation 12:1-2 and verse 5.

2. The dragon seems to be Satan, the devil. What does he do? Revelation 12:4 and verse 7.

3. The devil loses the war and gets cast down to earth. Summarize what a loud voice says about this. Rev. 12:10-12

4. The Dragon (the devil) wages war starting with the woman. (Revelation 12:13-16) While this is a difficult passage to understand, who does the devil ultimately wage war against? Revelation 12:17

The Beast from the Sea (Revelation 13:1-10)

5. The first (of two) beast rises up from the sea. Maybe this means we will colonize the oceans some day and he will be from there. Or perhaps he will be a sailor from some

country. Or maybe from an island nation such as Cyprus in the Mediterranean Sea. Or perhaps there is some other explanation. But either way, he had multiple heads, horns, and crowns. These are likely figurative and possibly indicate different countries as the book of Daniel does in Daniel 7:23-25. (Sometimes, people call this beast the antichrist.) All this is up to interpretation. However what the beast does is clear. What is it? Revelation 13:2

6. What does the beast do and what is the result? Rev. 13:5-8

What does Revelation 13:10b say God's people should do?

Beast from the earth (Revelation 13:11-18)

7. What was the second beast's mission? Rev. 13:12-15

8. In addition to getting people to worship the first beast, what else did he do? Revelation 13:16

What was the result? Revelation 13:17

The first beast is represented by the number "666". This is either his name or the number representing his name. It is a riddle. What could this number possibly be? Discuss ideas in your group.

The Lamb (Revelation 14:1-13)

9. 144,000 people are fully devoted to Christ (the Lamb) in Revelation 14:1-5. Whether this is a figurative or literal number is unknown. In conjunction with these are three angels. Summarize what they do below:

1st Angel Revelation 14:6-7?

2nd Angel Revelation 14:8?

3rd Angel Revelation 14:9-11?

What does this say about God's people? Revelation 14:12-13

The Harvest (Rev. 14:14-15:4)

10. Someone like the Son of Man swings a sickle to harvest the Earth. (Revelation 14:14-16) Several angels do the same. They figuratively harvest grapes but these "grapes" are ripe for judgment. (Revelation 14:18) What results when these "grapes are then trampled in a winepress? Rev. 14:20

11. Revelation 15 starts out with a song before the last seven plagues on the Earth. What were the people singing? Revelation 15:3-4

Seven Bowls of Plagues (Rev. 15:5-16:21)

12. In Rev. 15:5-8 seven angels dressed in white bring the final seven plagues to the Earth. Write them below:

1st Plague Revelation 16:2?

2nd Plague Revelation 16:3?

3rd Plague Revelation 16:4?

Why did God do this? Revelation 16:5-7

4th Plague Revelation 16:8-9?

5th Plague Revelation 16:10?

6th Plague Revelation 16:12-14 and verse 16?

7th Plague Revelation 16:17-21?

What did these people do as a result of these plagues? (See Revelation 16:9, 11, and 21)

Note in Revelation 16:15 Jesus gives a promise with a condition. What is the promise?

What is the condition?

What does this mean to you?

These chapters had a lot of imagery. The Beasts are exposed which are controlled by Satan. But also the woman and her child versus the dragon representing Christ versus Satan. (For more on the Beast see Daniel 7:2-7.)

The 2011 East Coast Earthquake

On August 23rd, 2011 there was an East Coast earthquake centered in Virginia. I (Ed) was on the fourth floor of an office building near Quantico, Virginia in a large room with about 50 people. It shook us some at first, then it seemed to die down, then it started up again shaking more violently. The ceiling also seemed to move! We all filed down the stairs, the stairs shaking as we went, probably due to the weight of all 50 of us rather than from the earthquake, as it was over by then. It lasted about 45 seconds and turned out to be a 5.8 magnitude quake, but to many it seemed much stronger. Our house developed a thin six-foot long crack in the foundation and the Washington Monument and the National Cathedral also had damage. In Mineral, VA, the epicenter, several houses and a school were destroyed. Janice (my wife) was at home and said the shaking was so violent she thought the house was coming down. It was scary.

The greatest earthquake ever recorded was a 9.5 in Chile in 1960 and a 9.2 was recorded in Alaska in 1964. It is thought the greatest earthquakes in the eastern US happened over a three month period from 1811-1812 in New Madrid, Missouri, before there were measurements. But reports state that the Mississippi River actually ran backwards due to the quake and church bells rang as far away as Boston. They estimate it at 7.5, but it was on the eastern tectonic plate which made it feel much stronger.

Revelation has three earthquakes listed. One is in chapter 6, another in chapter 10 and the final one in chapter 16. This final quake is said to be the worst earthquake since people were placed on the earth. The city of Babylon is split into thirds and the cities of many nations fall into rubble. It also says every island disappears and all mountains are leveled. That is a huge earthquake! If the greatest quake known is a 9.5, then this earthquake must be at least a 10. Maybe even an 11 or more! No earthquake has ever been recorded at level 10 or higher. To level all mountains and sink all islands just think about how powerful it must be!

Going from one number to the next number (say a 6 to a 7 or an 8 to a 9) means the earthquake is ten times more destructive as it increases one number. So going from a 6 (which was basically our recent east coast quake) to a 10 or more means this earthquake in Revelation 16 is at least 10,000 times more powerful than what we experienced in 2011.

Believe me, no one would want to experience that! Praise God, Isaiah 26:3 still stands today, “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.” God will ultimately be our peace, even when the really big one comes!

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also continue praying daily using your prayer sheets.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Again, we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for group members to share their answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Come prepared to share next week what you’ve seen God do in your life.

WEEK 6

Open in prayer

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Share progress on your Goals

Discuss the Lesson

Read and Discuss the article Disaster Relief

Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer

LESSON 6 – Rev. 17-20 Defeat of Evil

In these chapters we will see the final battle between good and evil. Many movies are made about what goes on here, but God's Word is the truth. Let's see what images it raises in our minds for the final war.

The Great Prostitute (Revelation 17)

1. Who is the Great Prostitute? Revelation 17:1
2. What has happened as a result of her? Revelation 17:2
3. What was she like? Revelation 17:3-6
4. Summarize how this is to be interpreted? Rev. 17:7-18

Note that God orchestrates all of this. (Revelation 17:17)
This is all according to God's Word.

The Fall of Babylon (Revelation 18)

5. Babylon falls. An angel talks of this. Summarize what he says in Revelation 18:2-3.
6. Another voice from heaven calls out. Summarize what it says here. Revelation 18:4-8
7. The kings of the world also talk out about this. In fact they mourn. What do they say? Revelation 18:10

8. Merchants also mourn because they have traded with Babylon. What basically do they say? Revelation 18:11-20

Note that it was not only goods traded, but also people.

9. Finally, a mighty angel tells of Babylon's fate. What did it say will happen to it? (Revelation 18:21-23a)

What did it do wrong? (Revelation 18:23b-24)

Victory in Heaven (Revelation 19)

10. Then there are several shouts (praises) in heaven. Pick one and write about it here: (Choose Revelation 19:1-3 or Revelation 19:4-5 or Revelation 19:6-8 or Revelation 19:9.)

11. Revelation 19:10 ends with a description of what prophecy is. What is it?

Note: Ed's friend Lee came to Christ after reading the book of Revelation. It scared him enough that he wanted to give his life to Christ. Will you also act on this book, whether it be coming to Christ or turning your life over to Him fully?

12. Finally, the moment all history has been waiting for happens. Who comes out of heaven on a white horse and what is He like? Revelation 19:11-16

What happens Revelation 19:14-20

What is the ultimate fate of evil men? Revelation 19:20-21

The Millennium (Revelation 20)

13. An angel comes with the key to the bottomless pit. He then takes Satan, the devil, and what does he do with him? Revelation 20:1-3

14. After the devil is put into the pit there is a period where certain believers will reign with Christ for a thousand years (called the “Millennium”). Describe these believers and why they have this privilege? Revelation 20:4-6

15. What happens after the thousand years? Rev. 20:7-10

16. Then the final judgment comes in Revelation 20:11-15. Describe it here.

People will be judged based on their deeds. Then based on whether their name is written in the Book of Life, that will decide if they are thrown into the Lake of Fire. Note that John 6:29 says the work we must all do is believe on Jesus. John 6:29 says, “Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” That is what gets us into the Book of Life. Praise God, it’s free to everyone!

Disaster Relief

As we go through Revelation there are many, many disasters. We stand back in awe when one third of the human population dies at one time. And so we should, because it is so horrific. We don’t know when the events of Revelation will start to unfold. It may be another two thousand years, five months, tomorrow, or today.

But there are disasters of some sort every day somewhere around the globe. It might be a flood, an earthquake, a hurricane, a fire, mass murder, a major car

crash, a nuclear meltdown – the list goes on and on. What are we as Christians supposed to do about these?

Jesus says if we have the world's goods yet close our hearts against those that are in need, God's love is not in us. So we should help. One way is to give to or participate in relief organizations. We leave a certain percentage of our giving for emergencies that happen around the world. Agencies that we have given through to help others in need are World Vision, Samaritan's Purse, Cru (Campus Crusade for Christ), International Justice Mission, Imaji House (Thailand), and Bombay Teen Challenge (India).

Giving through a Christian relief agency such as these not only helps alleviate suffering, but it also shows the world that Jesus and His Church cares. That is a message that is timeless! Will you consider doing this?

Assignment for next week

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also continue praying using your prayer list.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Again, we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for group members to share their answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving some of your goals in the next week. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life. You may also want to ask your group leader to write something on your Goals page. This will be an encouragement to you and to your leader as well.
4. Read the article on Spiritual Stories. Develop at least one spiritual story (testimony) of how God has worked in your life.
5. Look over the questions on "How Has Your Life Changed?" and think through each of them. Come prepared to share what God has done in your life through this study and your time with Him.

WEEK 7

Open in prayer and then Share progress on your Goals

Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal

Discuss the Lesson and Pray Together as the study suggests

Discuss Sharing Spiritual Stories

Discuss How Has Your Life Changed?

Discuss Continuing On and Close in Prayer

LESSON 7, Rev.21-22 Forever with Christ

After Satan is gone, God goes about making all things new. Let's see what everything will eventually be like.

1. The old heaven and earth disappear. (Revelation 21:1)
What takes its place? Revelation 21:1

2. Then a new Jerusalem comes down from heaven. What is the significance of this do you think? Revelation 21:3

What will God do? Revelation 21:4

Which of these are most important to you and why?

3. What does God then say? Revelation 22:5-8

4. Then John gets to see the New Jerusalem, called the Bride, the wife of the Lamb. Revelation 21:9 This can be confusing as Ephesians 5 says Christians and the Church are the bride of Christ. A clue to this is given later in Revelation 21. Who does Revelation 21:27 say will live in this city?

5. Since only believers (those whose names are written in the Book of Life) will live in the city, then the New Jerusalem with all believers is truly the Bride of Christ. How would you describe this Bride:

In Appearance? Revelation 21:2, 11-14

In Size? Revelation 21:15-17

In Materials? Revelation 21:18-21

In its Light Source? Revelation 21:22-23

It's inhabitants? Revelation 21:24-27

6. Besides people, what else is in the city? Revelation 22:1-2

7. There is a promise in Rev. 22:3 about no longer will there be a curse upon anything. What do you think this means?

8. Who else will be in the New Jerusalem? Rev. 22:3-5

9. The “world” would say this is all nonsense. But what does Revelation 22:6-7 say?

10. The angel then goes on to tell John to worship only God and to not keep the words of this book silent because the time is near (Revelation 22:9-10). What else are we to do as believers in Christ? Revelation 22:11b

11. What does Christ promise us? Revelation 22:12-13

12. Then a wedding invitation of sorts is given in Revelation 22:16-17. What is it?

Note that not only God but also the bride gives this invitation to everyone to come to Him (Revelation 22:17). The bride includes us if we are Christians. That means we are also to invite others to come to Christ. One way to do this is to share what God has shown you. You can do this by sharing things from your Quiet Times with others. This will start some spiritual conversations. You can also tell some of what God has done in your life. These can be spiritual stories you've experienced. Following is one way to do this.

Sharing Spiritual Stories

One way to witness is to think through what God has done in your life and then share them with both Christians and non-Believers as opportunities arise. These spiritual stories of what God has done are sometimes called “testimonies”. As you share what Christ has done in your life, God will use what you say to help lead others to Christ. **Each Christian has several spiritual stories as to how God has changed their life.** It may be victory over some sin or bad habit, such as gossip, smoking, liquor, pornography, or infidelity. It may be changes in attitudes or goals, such as going to a specific school, a change in vocation, trusting God, faithfulness, desire to help others, or inner peace. It may be a hunger for (or understanding of) the Bible or the knowledge that now you have eternal life and know where you will spend eternity. It can also be prayer answers.

Each of these can be a spiritual story you can share with someone else. In sharing your stories, arrange each one into three sections (remembered by “**P-P-S**”) and then discuss a bit on each one:

1-The **Past** – The issue you used to have and how you dealt with it.

2-The **Present** - Specifically what your life is like now in this area. (Or say what God has done in some area.)

3-The **Secret** – How you received Christ personally and how He helps you daily. Mention that you aren’t perfect, but He has made all the difference in your life!

You can have several spiritual stories as items 1 and 2 will be different for each issue, but item 3 is essentially the same.

Here’s an example: Issue: Purity in my thought life.

1. The **Past** for this Issue: I used to really struggle with a “wandering eye”.

2. The **Present** for this Issue: Now I’m having victory in this area of my life and praising God for my wonderful wife! I know how it can negatively affect my marriage.

3. The **Secret**, How Christ made this happen: What’s the secret? You see in college I invited Christ to come into my

life and take control. Now he's helping me. Thinking of Him and His Word when I'm tempted has made all the difference.

You may want to use a special verse of Scripture to support what you did. God will use these verses in their life. Do not preach to them, however, and try to keep it short – one or two minutes is best. You may also want to practice an example spiritual story. Begin praying for opportunities to share them, and pray by name for those you know that need to receive Christ. In sharing one of your spiritual stories, look for common ground and leverage off that. If they are having trouble in their marriage and God has helped you in your marriage then share a “Marriage” Story. If they are having trouble with a specific habit and God has helped you with some habit, then share a “Habit” Story with them. (It doesn't have to be the same habit.) Use a simple approach such as, "I used to struggle with that, and tried several things but with limited success, but I had something happen to me that has really helped me in that area of my life. Could I tell you what was the secret that really helped (or “Can I tell you about it?") Once they agree, share it with them.

After sharing a particular spiritual story with them, see what their interest is. If they seem genuinely interested, or make statements indicating they wish they had something like that, ask if they have ever personally asked Christ into their life. Tell them you'd be glad to share with them how they can do that. Use a gospel tract for that or share John 3:16 or G-I-F-T (included in this study). If they would like to turn their life over to God now, then tell them they can pray and tell God they have sinned, be willing to turn from that sin, and in prayer personally ask Christ to come into their heart and life. Pray with them if they are willing. If they receive Christ, go over 1 John 5:11 and 12 with them for assurance. Now write your own spiritual story below:

Issue in My Life: _____

1. The **P**ast for this Issue: _____

2. The **P**resent for this Issue: _____

3. The **S**ecret, How Christ made this happen: _____

In Closing, Revelation closes in 22:18-21 with the admonition that if we add anything to this book, God will add to that person the plagues in this book. And if we remove anything God will remove that person's share in the tree of life. This is because Jesus is coming soon! Fortunately, we have God's grace while we wait!

How Has Your Life Changed?

1. Overall what have you thought of this study?
2. Since going through this study how has your life changed?
3. Any new habits you've picked up? Attitudes?
4. Where would you like to see your Christian life in 1 year? 2?

Continuing On

As you now know for yourself, Revelation can certainly be a difficult book. It can be difficult in trying to understand it, and it can be difficult in trying to digest what will happen at the end times. But as we mentioned earlier, if you get nothing from it other than knowing Jesus is definitely coming back and that He will win in the end. That is enough to get from this book.

But we trust you have also learned quite a bit about it from this study. Be a life-long student of the Word of God and read it reflectively daily. Sometime you may want to go back and do another study of the book of Revelation.

And we hope you have grown spiritually as you've met with Him daily. In John 15 Jesus likens Himself to a vine, and us to the branches. We should abide in Him and He in us. This refers to a life-long process of becoming one with Him - trusting Him, obeying Him, really getting to know Him, loving Him.

For additional information, please see the appendix for other ideas.

APPENDICES

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The “10X” BIBLE READING PLAN!

Read the Bible through ten times in your lifetime!

Impossible you say? Hardly. If you read three chapters a day you'll read it through every year. So ten times would take ten years at that rate, so it's definitely do-able! And the Bible changes lives, so why not? What else will you give your time to? Reading three chapters a day takes just fifteen minutes! You read other things every day, so why not the Bible? It's well worth it! But how do you start, you ask? Well the Bible is actually a collection of 66 related books and does NOT have to be read in order from cover to cover. In fact it makes more sense to start with the New Testament about Jesus, then read the Old Testament inter-weaving the two, going back and forth. As there are four gospels (good news about Jesus) divide your New Testament reading into four parts. That way you spread the gospels out. After each gospel read some of that author's letters or instruction. Then after each New Testament section, read part of the Old. Below, the books of the Bible are arranged not in the order they appear in the Bible, but are arranged to help understanding by grouping them by author or by type of literature. (Look in your Bible's Table of Contents to find a particular Bible book. Or go online at [Bible Gateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com).) Each day read as many chapters as you like. (But even one chapter is OK.) The plan tells something about each book before you begin. In some books you may want to just skim certain parts while in others you will want to read them more reflectively. Again, three chapters a day would get you through the entire Bible in a year. But taking longer is no problem. Being consistent and reading only one chapter a day will get you through the entire Bible many times during the course of your life. And reading more reflectively will also get the Bible more into you. It's more important to get the Bible in and through you, changing your life, than just going through it as fast as you can. Changing your heart and character takes time, so be a life-long reader of the Bible. **Start today with the plan below. Check off each book as you finish them.** And once you've read the Bible

following this plan, repeat it or use some other. Make your overall plan be to read the Bible at least ten times in your life! “10X!” God will change your life through it. That’s the real goal!

I. The NEW TESTAMENT

Gospel Book about Jesus and History of the Early Church

- ☐ **Luke – Jesus, the Perfect Man** by Luke
- ☐ **Acts (or The Acts of the Apostles)** also by Luke, introduces Paul

Letters (Instruction) written by the Apostle Paul

- ☐ **Romans** – Salvation by faith.
- ☐ **1st Corinthians** – Sin, love, and spiritual gifts.
- ☐ **2nd Corinthians** – Being an Apostle.
- ☐ **Galatians** – Law, Grace, and Faith.
- ☐ **Ephesians** – Salvation by grace alone.
- ☐ **Philippians** – Joyful living.
- ☐ **Colossians** – The supremacy of Christ.
- ☐ **1st Thessalonians** – Jesus’ return.
- ☐ **2nd Thessalonians** – Jesus return (Part 2).
- ☐ **1st Timothy** – Caring for a church.
- ☐ **2nd Timothy** – Teach others about Christ.
- ☐ **Titus** – Caring for the church.
- ☐ **Philemon** – A slave converts to Christianity.

The OLD TESTAMENT

Wisdom and Poetry Books

- ☐ **Job** – A man losing everything praises God
- ☐ **Psalms** – Prayers, praise, and God’s Love.
- ☐ **Proverbs** – The wisest sayings of all.
- ☐ **Ecclesiastes** – A seeker’s search for God.
- ☐ **Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon)** – Intense physical attraction and human love.

II. The NEW TESTAMENT

Gospel (Good News) about Jesus

- ☐ **Mark – Jesus, the Obedient Servant** by Mark, an associate of the Apostle Peter

Letters (Instruction) by Peter

- ☐ **1st Peter** – Holy living amidst hardship.

- ❑ **2nd Peter** – Dealing with false teachers.

The OLD TESTAMENT

“The Books of Moses” or “The Law”

- ❑ **Genesis** – The book of beginnings.
- ❑ **Exodus** – Moses and the journey from Egypt.
- ❑ **Leviticus** – Jewish worship.
- ❑ **Numbers** – Censuses and wanderings.
- ❑ **Deuteronomy** – The “Second Law”.

III. The NEW TESTAMENT

Gospel Book about Jesus

- ❑ **Matthew – Jesus the Messiah** by Matthew

Letters (Instruction)

- ❑ **Hebrews** – The sufficiency of Jesus, Author unknown.
- ❑ **James** – Faith in action, by James, Jesus’ half-brother.
- ❑ **Jude** – Trouble-makers, by Jude, another half-brother.

The OLD TESTAMENT

Historical Books

- ❑ **Joshua** – Into the “promised land”.
- ❑ **Judges** – They abandoned God. “Judges” help them.
- ❑ **Ruth** – Two women pursuing a man.
- ❑ **1st Samuel** – Life of Samuel and King Saul
- ❑ **2nd Samuel** – King David and his family.
- ❑ **1st Kings** – King Solomon and the breakup.
- ❑ **2nd Kings** – Two countries and their kings.
- ❑ **1st Chronicles** – Family tree/David’s reign
- ❑ **2nd Chronicles** – Solomon’s reign and other Kings
- ❑ **Ezra** – Rebuilding the temple.
- ❑ **Nehemiah** – Rebuilding the wall.
- ❑ **Esther** – A plot to exterminate the Jews.

IV. The NEW TESTAMENT

Gospel Book about Jesus (by the Apostle John)

- ❑ **John – Jesus, the Divine Son of God** by John

Letters (Instruction) all by the Apostle John

- ❑ **1st John** – Assurance of Salvation/Prayer.

- ❑ **2nd John** – Supporting Missionaries.
- ❑ **3rd John** – Supporting Missionaries (Pt 2).

The OLD TESTAMENT

Prophecy or Prophet Books

MAJOR PROPHETS – Named after the writers

- ❑ **Isaiah** – Judgment and Comfort.
- ❑ **Jeremiah** – Judgment against the nations.
- ❑ **Lamentations** – A cry for help (by Jeremiah)
- ❑ **Ezekiel** – God will one day return.
- ❑ **Daniel** – Interpreting dreams of the future.

MINOR PROPHETS – Named after the writers

- ❑ **Hosea** – God’s compassion for His people.
- ❑ **Joel** – The coming Day of the Lord.
- ❑ **Amos** – A book about social justice.
- ❑ **Obadiah** – Judgment against a country.
- ❑ **Jonah** – Shows God’s heart for people.
- ❑ **Micah** – A message of judgment and hope.
- ❑ **Nahum** – Judgment on the city of Nineveh.
- ❑ **Habakkuk** – God and the prophet just talk.
- ❑ **Zephaniah** – God will judge the nations.
- ❑ **Haggai** – Rebuilding and obedience.
- ❑ **Zechariah** – Exhortation/encouragement.
- ❑ **Malachi** – The Messianic King is coming!

The NEW TESTAMENT

Prophecy Book by the Apostle John

- ❑ **Revelation (or the Revelation of John)** – The return of Jesus!

Congratulations, you’ve just read the Bible!

Now read it again.

Make your lifetime plan be “10 times!”

10X!

LIST of “PLAGUES” IN REVELATION & RESULTS

Revelation 6

- Take peace from earth. War/slaughter everywhere
- Scales/economic ruin?
- Death/ $\frac{1}{4}$ of earth to kill with sword, famine, disease, animals
- Earthquake/sun black, moon red, stars fell

Revelation 7

- No winds blow

Revelation 8

- Thunder, lightning, strong quake
- Hail and fire mixed with blood/ $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of earth on fire, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of trees burned, all green grass burned, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of sea becomes blood, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of sea creatures died, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of ships destroyed,
- Great star fell, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of water made bitter, many people die, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of sun made dark, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of moon dark, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of stars too, $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of day made dark

Revelation 9

- Open a shaft, sunlight and air turn dark
- Locusts, sting like scorpions/ people are tortured for 5 months!
- 4 angels/ kill $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of people on earth through fire, smoke, and burning sulfur

Revelation 11

- Fire flashes from the witnesses mouths
- Rivers and oceans turned into blood
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years of no rain
- Earthquake kills 7,000 people
- Huge hail storm

Revelation 12

- $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of stars swept away and thrown to earth

Revelation 13

- Beast wages war against God's people and conquers them.

Revelation 14

- Tormented with fire and burning sulfur forever and ever. No relief day or night.
- Blood flows in a stream 180 miles long

Revelation 16

- Malignant sores broke out on everyone who had the mark of the beast on them.
- Sea became like blood, all the creatures in the sea died.
- Rivers and springs became blood
- Sun scorches everyone.
- The Beasts kingdom thrown into darkness
- Euphrates River dries up
- Biggest earthquake ever – City split into thirds and falls.
- Every island disappears, every mountain is leveled
- Hailstorm with 75 pound hailstones

Revelation 19

- Beast and Prophet thrown alive into Lake of Fire

Revelation 20

- Their army all killed Vultures eat everyone's flesh.
- Fire from heaven destroys everyone's flesh.
- Devil thrown into Lake of Fire.
- Anyone not in Book of Life thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Questions and Answers and Other Different Things

There are many weird and unusual things in Revelation. Some of these are due to the type of book it is, prophecy. Many prophecies are figurative, such as the dreams Joseph interpreted for Pharaoh in Genesis where skinny cows represent lean times and fat cows represent prosperous times. Some of Revelation is like that. But other prophecies are very literal, such as the prophecy about Christ's birth in Isaiah where a virgin will conceive and bear a son. Some of Revelation is like that. Revelation undoubtedly has both literal and figurative prophecies in it. Until these events

happen, however, it will be impossible to know for sure is a specific passage is to be taken figuratively or literally. Deuteronomy 29:29 says that there are some secrets only God knows, so we won't understand all that takes place in Revelation until we get to heaven. But just because we can't know for sure doesn't mean we can't guess a bit. So here are our guesses at what some of these unusual and weird things in Revelation could be:

Jesus as described in Revelation? Revelation describes Jesus much different than we ordinarily think of Him. We think of Him as a person, and He surely is. But this prophecy refers to Him as a conqueror, a rider on a white horse, a lamb with seven horns and eyes. Revelation 1:13-16 says, "The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance". These verses show His wisdom and purity (His white hair), His ability to convict (eyes like blazing fire), His compassion for His church (holding the seven stars, or angels of the seven churches, in His right hand), His Word which pierces our soul (the sharp double-edged sword coming out of His mouth), and finally His deity (His face shining like the sun).

The Seven-Fold Spirit? God is Spirit as John 4:24 says. But we know that God is also the Father and the Son. Together they make up the Trinity. It is thought that the number seven is the perfect number as it is the same as the number of days in a week. So the Seven-Fold Spirit could be the perfect Spirit of God.

7 Golden Lamp stands? These are the seven churches that Jesus writes letters to in this book. Much of what he says to them is appropriate for all churches at that time, and also applicable for churches today.

The Throne Room in Heaven and the Creatures in it? Revelation 4 paints an unusual picture of heaven. While we may think of it as figurative, there are other verses in the

Bible that provide a similar scene. Isaiah 6 is one of those passages. Maybe this is figurative, maybe literal.

666? – This is the identification for what is commonly called the antichrist or the Beast. He is not Satan, but definitely is controlled by Satan. He is likely a world leader and seems to be very charismatic. Revelation says his number is “666”. The question comes up, “What number?” Is this somehow someone’s initials? Is it the number of humanity, one less than perfection (which some say is the number seven)? We don’t know. But let’s speculate. What could “666” mean? Who has a number? In the US there is the social security number or SSN that everyone has. Maybe it's his SSN! But the SSN is nine digits, how do you get three digits out of that? One SSN would be obvious: 006-06-0006. But what if it’s a different SSN and you have to manipulate the numbers? One way would be to add up all the numbers in each of the three parts of an SSN until you get a single digit for each part. For example, 987-24-1329 would become 24-6-15 if you add up the numbers in each part. ($9+8+7=24$, $2+4=6$, and $1+3+2+9=15$). Then you would have to further add any remaining two digit numbers to get 6-6-6. ($2+4=6$ and $1+5=6$) In the same way, 996-96-9996 would also become 6-6-6. There are 1,331,000 combinations that would yield 6-6-6 using this methodology. Who knows? (Note: If your SSN adds up to 666 this way, don’t worry. Trust God. We doubt seriously that it has anything to do with SSNs.)

What is Babylon and the Great Prostitute? Revelation 17 and 18 seem to be referring to a city that is the monetary capital of the world. It is a great city. It is unknown if this is the actual city of Babylon in Iraq, or whether it is some other key world city: Washington, DC, New York, Tokyo, London, Beijing, Moscow, etc.

The Woman and the Dragon? Referred to in Revelation 12 this seems to be referring to Jesus’ mother Mary (or the nation of Israel) as it talks about her having a child who will be ruler and taken away from Satan (the dragon) before he can destroy him. If this is the case, then this portion of Revelation can be looked at as having already happened.

Sometime prophecy mixes in the past and present with the future. This makes sense for the woman and the dragon.

The Beast(s)? as mentioned for “666”, at least one of the Beasts is a future world leader that is very evil. The book of Daniel also refers to this leader. There are a total of three Beasts mentioned in Revelation. One is the main leader, the second a religious leader, and a third being a Scarlet Beast. We aren’t really sure what that means, but it results in a “trinity” of evil. This may be Satan’s attempt to be like God, who is a Trinity.

Locusts with Human Heads? It is possible that these are literally locusts with human heads. (Boy, what a sight that would be!) But here is another interpretation. If the end times were to happen in our near future and John saw it, what would he call attack helicopters with Stinger missiles striking people? The front of helicopters do indeed look somewhat like a face. So this could very well be helicopters, or it could be locusts with human heads and a stinging tail.

Why the Thousand Years? The thousand years, also called the millennium is a period when Christ will reign with His followers on this earth. Satan will be thrown into the dungeon, and so there will be no evil in the world that can be accredited to the devil. But some men likely will still sin. So the thousand years could be God’s way of showing people that they can’t blame Satan for all their sin. Even without the devil we still need Christ as we are all sinners by nature.

Lake of Fire? This brings up a picture of molten lava. Something extremely hot, yet fluid. This is the fate of Satan, the Beasts, and all his followers. Another name for this is hell. This is one reason to surrender your life to Christ as your Lord and Savior so that you don’t end up there for all eternity. (See Luke 12:47-48, Matthew 16:27, Colossians 3:25, and Proverbs 24:12.)

How is the New Jerusalem Christ’s Bride? We believe from Ephesians 5:22-23 that all Believers and the Church are the Bride of Christ. But here the New Jerusalem is called the Bride of Christ. Even though this new city is beautiful, Christ’s bride can’t just be the city itself. So it must be the

city along with God's people inside it. Together they must make up a very gorgeous sight!

Coming to Christ through Revelation (Ed)

One of my best friends came to Christ through the book of Revelation. He said the horrors he saw there really shook him up and made him realize that he didn't want to get through life without knowing Christ. It sounded too scary. Once he became a Christian that fear went away!

You too may be thinking that as you go through the study of this book. Well, the good news is salvation is free to anyone who accepts it. It's a gift. Using the acronym G-I-F-T let's see what the Bible says:

Have You Received the G-I-F-T of Salvation?

The Christian life is the most rewarding experience possible, because it is a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Biblical Christianity is God reaching down to us, caring for us, and accepting us just the way we are. A **gift**, not earned.

G - God Loves Us and Has a Wonderful Plan

Some people say God couldn't possibly be concerned about them. But look at 1 Peter 5:7 and John 3:16. They say God does love us and has a wonderful plan for us – eternal life.

I – I Sin and Do Things Wrong (We All Do!)

But there is a problem. The Bible says all people have something in common. Instead of the life God intended, we mess it up, and there is an awful result. Look at Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12. Our sin separates us from God. Some people think the way to win favor with God is to be a good person and do good works. But look at what the Bible says in Eph. 2:8, 9. We simply can't earn our way to heaven!

F – Forgiveness is Through Christ

With people in such a helpless situation, God didn't just leave us hanging. He sent Jesus for us. See Romans 5:8. To those who say there are many ways to heaven, the Bible differs. John 14:6 says there is only one way - Jesus.

T – Trust in Jesus

In John 6:29 Jesus says we must believe in Him to have the abundant life God intends. In Revelation 3:20 Jesus gives

the promise he will come into our life if we ask. He wants to be part of everyone's life. You can invite Him in by praying, **"Lord Jesus, I know I have done things wrong and I am sorry. I ask that you help me to turn from those things. I ask Jesus to come into my heart and life and save me. Amen."** If this is the prayer of your heart, Jesus is in your life! 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that He then makes you a new person.

Recommended Reading

- *The Bible book of Daniel, chapters 2, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12*
 - *Left Behind* books by Tim LaHaye & Jerry Jenkins
 - *Hard Sayings of the Bible* by Walter C. Kaiser Jr.
 - *The Bible Answer Book* by Hank Hanegraaff
 - *Hard Questions, Real Answers* by William Lane Craig
- You may also want to get a commentary on Revelation.

Four Interpretations of REVELATION

Most of the interpretations of Revelation fall into four categories:

1. Historical View - Revelation is a broad view of all history.
2. Future View - Revelation describes mostly future events.
3. Roman Empire Period View - Revelation mostly refers to the events of the apostolic era, or the fall of the Roman Empire.
4. Symbolic View - Revelation does not refer to actual people or events, but is an allegory of the spiritual path and the ongoing struggle between good and evil.

Some Terms Used by Christians

The exact timeline of the end times is known only to God. Christians over the ages have tried to understand what will happen. As a result they have come up with various terms and “positions” of how the final events will unfold. Some of these are:

Second Coming – When Christ returns to earth the second time as stated in Acts chapter 1. Some Christians believe it

will occur in one event, others believe it will occur in two (the rapture of the church from the earth being the first event).

Rapture – The church will be caught up with Christ (taken away from earth) as 1 Thessalonians 4:17 says. Those who believe in a one event second coming believe it means the resurrection generally.

Tribulation – A time of great turmoil as described in Revelation. Most believe it is a 7 year period.

Pre-Tribulation position – The rapture of the church off the earth occurs before the tribulation.

Mid Tribulation position – The rapture of the church occurs at the 3.5 yr (mid) point in the tribulation.

Post-Tribulation position – The rapture of the church is after the tribulation.

Judgment – When God will decide the fate of all. It appears that there are multiple future judgments. Of the main ones: There will be a judgment rewarding believers for their good works (2 Corinthians 5:10), a second will be the judgment of Satan and his “angels” (Revelation 20:10) resulting in their being cast into the Lake of Fire, and a third will be the Final Judgment of the unsaved (Revelation 20:15) based on whether or not their names are written in the Book of Life, resulting in their being cast into the Lake of Fire. Some also believe this final judgment will include Christians whose names are written in the Book of Life and who will therefore spend eternity with Christ.

Millennium – A thousand year period when Christ reigns on earth as described in Revelation 20:1-6.

Pre-Millennial position – Christ will physically return before the millennium.

Post-Millennial position – Christ will not return until after the millennium.

A-Millennial position – The belief that the millennium is figurative (symbolic).

Pan-Millennial position – A somewhat humorous belief that you can’t really know which millennial position is correct, but a belief that God is in control and everything is going to “pan-out” OK in the end.

QUIET TIME JOURNAL (Week 1)

GET STARTED: Pray for guidance, then pick a chapter in a **modern paperback Bible or New Testament such as the New Living Translation or The Message**. (You could start in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 or 1 John 2 as you read chapter 1 in practice.) Read and underline what stands out to you. Pick what you consider to be the best verse and fill out the appropriate journal entry. Then talk to God about it. Do this daily. As God leads, share what He shows you with others.

◇ **SUNDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response/prayer: _____

◇ **MONDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response/prayer: _____

◇ **TUESDAY** Date: _____ Read: _____ Best Verse: _____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response/prayer: _____

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What it said: _____

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My response/prayer: _____

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My response/prayer: _____

◇ **SATURDAY** Date:_____ Read:_____ Best Verse:_____
What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response/prayer: _____

QUIET TIME JOURNAL: Pray, Read, Underline, Record

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What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response/prayer: _____

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PRAYER PAGES

“Very early in the morning, Jesus got up, went to a solitary place, where He prayed.” Mark 1:35

Date/Request**Date/God's Answer**[illegible][illegible]

PRAYER PAGES

“Very early in the morning, Jesus got up, went to a solitary place, where He prayed.” Mark 1:35

Date/Request**Date/God's Answer**[illegible][illegible]

NEW TESTAMENT READING CHART

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly both for encouragement and for guidance. Psalm 119:9 says that a person should guard his (or her) life according to God's Word. But to do so you must be in The Book, not just have it in your house! The New Testament is an excellent place to start. Some people like to keep track of where they read to record their progress. Use the chart below to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them. Our prayer is that this will encourage you to read through the entire New Testament. You should be able to do so in about 9 months if you read 1 chapter daily. 3 chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in about a year. (A sheet like this listing all the chapters in the Old and New Testaments is found in the back of *Growing Strong in God's Family* by NavPress.)

Matthew	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28										
Mark	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
Luke	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24														
John	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21																	
Acts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28										
Romans	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
1 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			
2 Corinthians	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13						
Galatians	1	2	3	4	5	6													
Ephesians	1	2	3	4	5	6													
Philippians	1	2	3	4															
Colossians	1	2	3	4															
1 Thess.	1	2	3	4	5														
2 Thess.	1	2	3																
1 Timothy	1	2	3	4	5	6													
2 Timothy	1	2	3	4															
Titus	1	2	3																
Philemon	1																		
Hebrews	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13						
James	1	2	3	4	5														
1 Peter	1	2	3	4	5														
2 Peter	1	2	3																
1 John	1	2	3	4	5														
2 John	1																		
3 John	1																		
Jude	1																		
Revelation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22																

My Goals

Prayerfully set up specific goals in your spiritual life for this study. Three goals are given: to have a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, praying for understanding of Revelation, and reading Revelation. Set up any others that you like. Then **have someone else in your group initial on the line before each goal as you complete them.** You may also want to show them to your leader and ask for him or her to write about the growth they have seen in your walk with God during this time.

____ ***Have a Quiet Time daily for 7 consecutive days
(as shown by 7 consecutive journal entries)***

____ ***Prayed for understanding of Revelation***

____ ***Read the entire book of Revelation***

____ *Tell _____ about Christ*

____ *Invite/Bring _____ to church*

____ *Complete these Bible studies:*

____ *Read _____*

Other Goals

____ *Memorize some verses on the next page to reflect on*

Leader Comments (Optional)

Verses to Memorize

There are particular verses that you will find that mean so much to you or impact your life in such a significant way that it makes sense to commit them to memory so you can carry them with you everywhere! This page is for you to write down these verses as you find them so you can begin to memorize and put them in your heart and mind. (Some verses from this study are given below.) Learn the verse a phrase at a time, adding phrases until you can say it all from memory. And also learn the address (reference) of the verse as well (e.g., John 3:16) so you can show someone else where it is. I find it helpful to also write the verses out on small cards and carry them with me for review. Research has shown that once you can initially say a verse from memory you will be unable to do so in about an hour. But you will find that it will then take much less time to re-learn it. The same thing then occurs about a day later, a week later, etc., but each time taking less and less time to re-learn. Eventually it will be “in there” for good. I know verses I learned 42 years ago, and it’s made such an impact on my life that I’m still learning new ones today. So the key to remembering a verse is not only to memorize it, but also to review. Reviewing with another person is also helpful, and will be an encouragement to them. Think about this, if the Bible is ever banned, the verses we’ve memorized will be the only ones we’ll have. But even now, with Bibles in every book store and home, there are times during the day when we don’t have one with us, or it is impractical to pull out our Bibles. So at those times, the verses we’ve memorized are all that we have at that particular moment. The Holy Spirit will then use the verses you’ve memorized in your life and help you to be a ministry to others at any time! So memorize key verses. God bless you as you memorize.

Rev. 3:20, Isaiah 41:10, Ephesians 6:10-11, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Proverbs 29:25, Isaiah 43:1-2, and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17.
