

Men's Sunday Night Live
A Study in the Book of Revelation
The Best is Yet to Come
Introduction

The Apostle John took over the pastoral work in Ephesus about AD 70, including the churches in the surrounding area, “The seven churches of Asia Minor”. The Roman Emperor Nero had persecuted Christians in Rome, but the “fiery trial” that Peter had promised had not yet begun. But when Domitian became emperor (AD 81–96), the persecution was intensified. Domitian was as cold-blooded a murderer as you will ever meet in the pages of history. He promoted “emperor worship” and began his announcements, “Our Lord and God Domitian commands.” Everyone who spoke to him had to address him, “Lord and God.” He was bitter in his treatment of both Jews and Christians, and it was at his command that John was exiled to the Island of Patmos. Rome had a prisoner camp there where they labored in the mines. It was here in this isolated spot that John received the visions that make up Revelation. He wrote it about AD 95.

Author and Setting

Writing in the first person singular, the author of Revelation identifies himself several times as John. Early church tradition generally supports the view that this John was the apostle of Jesus and the writer of John's Gospel. It was here that he received the vision recorded here in Revelation.

Revelation is a Unique Book with Notable Characteristics

Christ-Centered

It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, not simply a prophetic program. In chapter 1, He is the Risen Priest-King; in chapters 2–3, He examines the churches; in chapters 4–5, He receives worship and praise and the title-deed to creation; in chapters 6–19, He judges the world and returns in glory; and in chapters 20–22, He reigns in glory and power.

Open

The word “revelation” means literally “unveiling.” Daniel was told to seal his book (Dan. 12:4), but John to “seal it not” (22:10). Instead of being a collection of puzzling prophecies, Revelation is a reasonable, orderly unveiling of Christ and His final victory over Satan, sin, and the world-system.

Symbolic

“He sent and signified it” (1:1) suggests that the book uses signs and symbols to convey its message. Some are explained (1:20; 4:5), some are unexplained (4:4; 11:3), and some are explained by referring to Old Testament parallels (2:7, 17, 27–28). This spiritual symbolism would be clear to the Christians receiving the book but would make no sense to their Roman persecutors. Keep in mind that symbols speak of reality. A flag, for example, stands for the existence of a nation. The picture of Christ in 1:12–16 is not literal, but each of these symbols conveys a spiritual truth about Him.

Based on the Old Testament

It is impossible to understand this book without referring to the Old Testament Scriptures. Out of the 404 verses in Revelation, 278 contain references to the Old Testament. It is calculated that there are over 500 references or illustrations to the Old Testament in Revelation, with Psalms, Daniel, Zechariah, Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Joel being referred to most often.

Numerical

There is a series of “sevens” in the book: seven churches, seals, trumpets, vials, lampstands, etc. The number three and one half also shows up often (11:2–3; 12:6; 13:5). We also find the 144,000 (a multiple of twelve) sealed Israelites, twelve stars (12:1), twelve gates (21:12), and twelve foundations (21:14).

Universal

Revelation focuses on the whole world. John sees nations, peoples, masses of humanity (10:11; 11:9; 17:15; Etc.). This book describes God’s judgment of the world and His creation of a new world for His people.

Majestic

This is the “book of the throne,” for from chapter 4 to the end, we read about the King and His rule. The word “throne” is used forty-four times; “king,” “kingdom,” or “rule” about thirty-seven times; “power” and “authority” some forty times. We see Christ as the Sovereign One, ruling from the heavenly throne.

Sympathetic

Throughout the book we see the sufferings of God’s people and the compassion from heaven for the people of God on earth. John is in exile (1:9); Antipas is martyred (2:13); the church in Smyrna will face imprisonment (2:10); souls under the altar cry for God’s avenging judgment (6:9–10); the hour of trial is coming (3:10); the great harlot has drunk the blood of the saints (17:6; 18:24; 19:2). Yet God will judge the world and save His people.

Climactic

Revelation is the climax of the Bible and shows the fulfillment of the plan and purpose of God for the universe.

Great Scriptures You Will Find in Revelation

“I Am the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”
Rev. 22:13

“The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day and night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!” Rev. 4:8

“You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” Rev. 4:11

“Saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” Rev. 5:12

“For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”
Rev. 7:17

“Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666.” Rev. 13:18

“And they gather them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.”
Rev. 16:16

“And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of kings and Lord of lords.” Rev. 19:16

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.” Rev. 21:1

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Surely I am coming quickly.’” Rev. 22:20

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Lesson 1 - Revelation 1:1-20
The Best is Yet to Come
A Very Special Book

God the Father gave the contents of the book to Jesus, who gave it to His angel to give to the Apostle John. John actually saw the contents of the book unfold before his eyes. Physically, he was on the isle of Patmos (1:9), but God transported him to heaven (4:1), to the wilderness (17:3), and to a mountain (21:10) that he might witness these events and record them for us. There is a blessing for the one who reads this book aloud and for those who hear it with attentive hearts.

John sends greetings to the churches in Asia Minor as he was commanded to do. He reviews the wonder of the Godhead, naming each of the Persons of the Trinity. He holds seven stars in His hand, and these stars are the messengers (or pastors) of the seven churches.

Christ selected seven churches out of many in Asia Minor in order to get across His specific message. Certainly, there were sins in the other churches, but the matters discussed in these seven churches cover all possible circumstances. Christ selected these seven churches to illustrate the spiritual conditions possible in the churches until He returns.

Note that a special word is spoken to the “overcomers” in each church. These “overcomers” are not the “super-saints” in each church, a special group that will receive special privileges from Christ, but the true believers in each of these churches. We dare not assume that every member of every local church in every period of history is a true child of God. Those who truly belong to Christ are “overcomers” (1 John 5:4-5). In every period of history, there have been true saints in the professing church (often called “the invisible church”). Christ speaks a special word of encouragement to them, and certainly we may apply these words to ourselves today.

Note the spiritual problems in these churches and what Jesus instructed them to do if they were to have His blessing:

A. Ephesus.

Busy working for the Lord, but no sincere love for Him. Program without passion. This is the busy church with the great statistics, but one drifting away from heartfelt devotion to Christ.

B. Smyrna.

This church gets no criticism from the Lord, but a danger is still present. This was a poor and suffering church. How easy it would have been to compromise, become rich, and escape persecution. How discouraged they might have been because they were not as “rich” as the Laodicean church.

C. Pergamos.

This church had members who held the false doctrine that it was easy to profess Christ while living in sin at the same time. Also, the people were under the heavy hand of spiritual dictators who promoted themselves, not the Lord.

D. Thyatira.

This church was out of place in teaching doctrine; Its doctrine led the people into sin. We must maintain God’s order in the local church (1 Timothy 2:11-15).

E. Sardis.

Reputation without life. Its best days were completed. This is the “has-been” church, a great name in the past, but no ministry today. It is ready to die, but it can receive new life if it will but strengthen what it has.

F. Philadelphia.

The church before the open door, taking the Gospel to the world. This is the church that holds the Word and honors Christ’s name. But Satan’s synagogue is not far away, and there is always the danger of compromise.

G. Laodicea.

The lukewarm, apostate church, with a big budget and no blessing. This is the church that is materially rich and spiritually poor. And the tragedy is, the people do not know how poor and miserable they really are! Christ stands outside the church, calling for even one believer to yield to Him.

Read Revelation 1:1-20 and answer the following questions

1. Define the word “revelation.” In what sense is this book a revelation?
2. Where did this message come from, and what is its purpose?

3. How is it personally important to you that Jesus is: (See 1:5)

a. “The faithful witness”?

b. “The first born from the dead”?

c. “The ruler of the kings of the earth”?

d. “Loves us and has washed us from our sins by His blood”?

4. What does it mean to you that Jesus “*has made us to be kings and priests to serve his God and Father*” (See 1:6)

5. How is the Lord described in 1:8? Explain these following phrases:

a. “*I Am the Alpha and the Omega*”

b. “*The Beginning and the End*”

c. “*Who is and who was to come*”

d. “*The Almighty*”

6. What did John hear in verse 10? What did the voice say in verse 11?

7. Where did the “*One like the Son of Man*” stand? What do the seven golden lampstands represent? (See 1:12-13)
8. Describe his personal appearance in 1:13-16. What’s the point?
9. What does the “*sharp two-edged sword*” seem to signify? (See Rev. 2:16; 19:15, 21; Heb. 4:12; Isaiah 49:2)
10. Explain the 7 lampstands? In what way is this a helpful illustration? (See 1:20)
11. Explain the 7 stars? What is the importance of the churches having angels? (See 1:20)
12. There are 24 titles for Jesus in 1:1-20. List as many as you can. What does each title tell you about Him?

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Lesson 2 - Revelation 2:1-29
The Best is Yet to Come
Jesus and the Churches (Part1)

The hands and feet of Jesus are highlighted here: “*He holds the seven stars in His right hand* (The messengers of the churches), *and He walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands* (The churches).” He begins with Ephesus, the city closest to Patmos, which was a great commercial center.

The church at Ephesus had works, labor, and patience but no love for Christ. In contrast, the Thessalonians were commended for their “work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope.” It is not “what” we do for Christ, but the motive behind it that counts. Ephesus had a busy church with high spiritual standards. The work had been difficult, but they had not fainted. In every way, it was a successful church from the human point of view. But, the Man in the middle of the churches saw what was missing: they had left their first love. Like Martha, we can be so busy working for Jesus that we have no time to love Him. Jesus is more concerned about what we do with Him than for Him. To the public, the Ephesian church was successful, to Jesus, it had fallen.

Jesus offers no criticism of the church of Smyrna. The saints were faithful in spite of suffering. They thought they were poor, but were rich, in contrast to Laodicea, which thought it was rich and was poor. The enemy may kill the body, but the saint need never fear the second death, which is hell. Those who are born twice will die only once. Those born only once will die twice. Pergamos means “married,” and this church was engaged to some doctrines and practices that were wrong.

The church of Thyatira was a wicked church that would not repent. This church had works, service, and patience, but it was filled with sin. Here we have Jezebel, the only woman mentioned in the seven letters, referring to wicked Queen Jezebel, wife of Ahab. She was a heathen woman, daughter of a priest of Baal. She was guilty of witchcraft, idolatry, and murder. Unfortunately, the church at Thyatira was following her example and leadership. Note that this false prophetess in the church was using false teaching to deceive God's people. She gave them license to sin. The tragedy is that she would not repent, even though God gave her the opportunity. It is never too late for a church to repent and return to the Lord, but we must not miss our God given opportunities.

Read Revelation 2:1-29 and answer the following questions

1. Discuss all the positives Jesus has to say about the church of Ephesus. Would He be able to say the same thing about your Christian life? (See Rev. 2:1-3)

2. How do you think that knowing that Jesus knew of their “patience” affected them?

3. The rebuke Jesus has for the Ephesian church is “*You have left your first love.*” What do you think this means?

4. What do you think it means that Jesus will remove their lampstand? Remember what the lampstand signifies before you answer this question (See Rev. 2:5)

5. How do you keep the passion and enthusiasm alive in your life for following Jesus? (See Rev. 2:5-7)

6. Why do you think the letter to Smyrna begins this way? Read verses 9-11 before answering?

7. What do you think Jesus means by calling Pergamos the place “*Where Satan’s throne is*”? (See Rev. 2:13)

8. What was the Pergamos church's problem?

9. What do you think it means that Jesus will come and war against them “*with the sword of His mouth*”? (See Rev. 2:16)

10. What does Jesus say about practicing “patient endurance”? (See Rev. 2:2-3, 10-11, 13, 17, 19, 25-26)

11. What do we learn about the situation in Thyatira from verses 19-29? What do we learn about Jesus?

12. How would you summarize Jesus’ message to the seven churches?

13. What do we learn from this chapter about your love for Jesus and your service to Him?

Seven Churches

<u>Church</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Praised For</u>	<u>Warned About</u>
Ephesus	The Loveless Church	Labor, patience, perseverance Not bearing evil Test false apostles	Leaving their first love
Smyrna	The Persecuted Church	Tribulation Poverty	Faithfulness under persecution
Pergamos	The Compromising Church	Holding fast to Jesus' name Not denying the faith	Allowing false teaching
Thyatira	The Corrupt Church	Love, service, faith, patience	Allowing Jezebel to teach Immorality Idolatry
Sardis	The Dead Church	A few faithful people	Deadness
Philadelphia	The Faithful Church	A little strength Keeping Jesus' word	Holding fast to works
Laodicea	The Lukewarm Church		Being lukewarm Pretending to be well off spiritually

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Lesson 3 - Revelation 3:1-22
The Best is Yet to Come
Jesus and the Churches (Part 2)

Sardis was a church with works but not much life. It once had a reputation for being alive, but it was dead. Jesus warns the saints: 1. Be watchful. 2. Strengthen the few things you do have. 3. Remember the Word you have received. 4. Hold fast and be ready when I come.

The "Book of Life" in verse 5, contains the names of all those who are born. Those who reject Jesus have their names blotted out of the book, for they are dead. True believers have their names recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. Those who do not have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire (20:15).

Verse 10 is one of the strongest declarations that the church will not go through the Tribulation. True believers today are a part of the Philadelphia church and will not enter into that seven years of awful judgment on earth. The very text of Revelation is another proof, for there is no mention of the church until 22:16. The prayer of 22:20 would be impossible to pray if we had to wait for the Tribulation to come before we would be raptured.

The name "Laodicea" means "the rule of the people" and suggests an independent church that no longer follows spiritual leaders or the authority of the Word of God. The church is lukewarm, a condition that comes from mixing hot and cold. It is a church with truth that has been diluted with error. The tragedy is that this church is "rich" and doesn't know that it is poor, blind, and naked. What a picture of the apostate church of today, with its fame, wealth, and political power, yet all the while spiritually poor.

Verse 20 is often used as a Gospel invitation, and this application is fine. But the basic interpretation is that Jesus stands outside the door of the lukewarm church. This church has wealth and power, but no Jesus. He is even willing to come into the life of one person, if that person will invite Him. How tragic that a church can become so lukewarm and proud that Jesus has to leave and stand outside. He is left outside their plans and programs, and their hearts.

Finally, the importance of the Word of God to the churches. Seven times Jesus calls the churches to hear what the Spirit is saying. When churches stop listening to the voice of the Spirit through the Word and start listening to the voices of false teachers, they begin to turn away from the truth.

Read Revelation 3:1-22 and answer the following questions

1. What did Jesus mean when he told Sardis “*You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*”? (See Rev. 3:1)
2. How do you think this happens to a church? What is the warning for us as a church and for us individually? What makes a church alive?
3. What best describes what Sardis needed the most? (See Rev. 3:3)
4. Jesus gives no promise of glory and authority, only the assurance that overcomers will not be blotted out from the book of life. What does this say about the way Jesus views churches like Sardis? (See 3:5)
5. In verse 8 we are told that the church in Philadelphia, “*had a little strength, have kept My Word, and have not denied My name.*” What might this look like in our church family today?

6. How did Jesus describe Himself to Laodicea? (See Rev. 3:14) What else do we know about the city and church of Laodicea?

7. What problem did Laodicea have? Explain the term, “*cold nor hot*” (See Rev. 3:15-16)

8. What did the Laodiceans think of themselves? What were they really like? (See 3:17)

9. What did Jesus offer to do for them? Why did Jesus speak as He did to them? (See Rev. 3:18-19)

10. What do we learn about Jesus’ character in verse 19?

11. Explain the illustration of Jesus at the door? What does it mean that He will dine with them? (See Rev. 3:20)

12. How can we grow in depending on God in our lives rather than ourselves?

13. What blessing is offered to overcomers?

The Dead Church **Sardis**

Sardis had been a rich and glorious city in the fifth and sixth centuries. After an earthquake in 17 AD, Rome rebuilt Sardis, but the reversal of decay was only temporary. The contrast between past splendor and present decay was notable, although the city was still wealthy. Although Sardis was built on a mountain and had virtually impregnable walls it had been taken twice because of irresponsible guards. Sardis was also the commercial center of wool and was known for its dying techniques. The patron of Sardis was Cybele, an Asian mother-goddess who was said to have the power to restore life to the dead. Sardis means “remnant.”

The Faithful Church **Philadelphia**

Philadelphia was a prosperous little commercial center. It's one drawback was that it was subject to earthquakes. In fact, after the quake of 17 AD, many of its inhabitants were too nervous to return to the city and settled in the surrounding countryside. For the little church in Philadelphia, the source of instability was the local synagogue, where the Jews may have taunted the Gentile Christians, saying they had no right of access or belonging to the Kingdom of God. In addition, commercial discrimination and even outright mob violence were present.

The Lukewarm Church **Laodicea**

Laodicea was a commercial and administrative center, the richest city in its district. In fact, when it was destroyed by an earthquake in 60 AD, Laodicea refused Roman aid that its neighbors gladly accepted. Laodicea was known throughout the Roman world of it's time for three things: It's banks, which even Cicero recommended for exchanging money, it's linen and wool industry, which produced cloth and carpets, especially from glossy black wool of sheep reared in the area, it's medical school and widely famed medicines, notable among which was an eye ointment. Laodicea had a large Jewish population, at least 7,500 adult males. Laodicea means “rule of the people.”

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Lesson 4 - Revelation 4:1-5:14
The Best is Yet to Come
The Throne Room

Chapter 4

This is a clear picture of the rapture of the church. Remember that Rev. 1:19 is the divinely given outline of the book; “*the things which will.*” Everything from 4:1 on is prophecy. The person on the throne is God the Father. John uses precious gems to symbolize the glory of the Father. Around the throne was an emerald-colored rainbow. This takes us back to Gen. 9:11–17, when God made His covenant with mankind and nature not to destroy the world again with water. The rainbow speaks of God’s promise and His covenant of mercy.

Twenty-four priests served in the Old Testament temple. It seems likely that these twenty-four elders signify the saints raptured and reigning with Christ in glory.

The lamps: These are symbols of the Holy Spirit. *The Sea of Glass:* Represents the heavenly temple, similar to the Old Testament temple. *The living creatures:* Four is the number of the earth, so we have here God’s covenant with creation. The stage is now set: the church has been taken to heaven; the Lord is on the throne; all of heaven praises Him and awaits the outpouring of His wrath.

Chapter 5

This particular scroll mentioned in verse 1 is Jesus’ title deed to creation. This scroll is the will, or testament, giving Him the right to claim creation. The fact that the scroll is written on both sides shows that nothing more can be added to it; the destiny of the sinful world is determined.

John looked for a lion, but he saw a Lamb. The word “slain” literally means “cut in the throat for a sacrifice.” Jesus was not merely killed; He was offered as a sacrifice. His death and resurrection are proof that He is worthy to be the heir of creation, worthy to take the book and open the seals. The multitudes of angels in heaven joined their voices in a great shout of praise when the Lamb took the scroll, but they did not sing. Singing is a privilege reserved for the saints of God who have experienced the joy of salvation.

After the angels completed their praise, all of creation joined to honor Jesus. “*Every creature*” suggests that all creation anticipates the redemption that will come when Jesus finally overcomes the enemy and establishes His kingdom.

Jesus is about to open the sealed book and release judgment on the world. Keep in mind the dual purpose of the Tribulation: 1. To punish the nations for their sins, especially the way they have treated Israel. 2. To purge Israel and prepare a believing remnant to receive Jesus when He comes again. The population of the earth are ignorant of this scene in heaven. As in the days of Noah and Lot, they go on their way, eating and drinking and ignoring God’s warnings. Then the Lamb will begin to open the book, and judgment will fall.

Read Revelation Chapter 4 and answer the following questions

1. What does it mean that John “*was in the Spirit*”? (See Rev. 4:2)
2. What impressions does 4:1-11 give you of God the Father? What can we learn about Him from this section?
3. From 4:8-11, what seems to be the number one occupation in Heaven?
4. What attitudes do you think are exposed by falling down before God? What is expressed by laying one’s crown before Him?
5. For what reasons is the Father worthy of worship? Which of His characteristics and actions are praised in 4:8-11?

6. How can your life right now be an act of worship to God?

Read Revelation Chapter 5 and answer the following questions

7. What are your thoughts and what's the importance of "*the scroll*" based on the focus it receives in heaven? (See Rev. 5:1-4)

8. Why was nobody worthy to open the scroll? Why was John so disappointed?

9. Who told John who was able to open the scroll?

10. Who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Why is He called that? Why is He called the Root of David? Why is He worthy?

11. In verse 8, John shows the twenty-four elders "*holding harps*" and "*golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.*" What does this image suggest to us about prayer? How about our own prayers? Why?

12. How should your actions and outlook be affected by the fact that you are part of God's Kingdom and one of His priests? As priests in God's in God's kingdom, what is our role? (See Rev. 5:10)

Words for Thought and Discussion

Chapter 4

4:3 Jasper and Sardis - 1 Tim 6:16 tells us that God dwells in “*unapproachable light*” and the one “*whom no one has seen or can see.*” He is described in terms of the reflective brilliance of precious stones

4:3 A Rainbow - God gives the rainbow as a sign of his faithfulness. (Gen. 9:12-17)

4:4 Twenty-Four Elders - The elders who lead worship in Heaven may have been a special angelic order or twenty-four redeemed men who represent the whole of redeemed humanity before the throne. Maybe the twelve patriarchs (representing old Israel) and the twelve apostles (representing new Israel).

4:5 Lighting & Thunder - In Revelation, each series of judgements concludes with lighting, thunder, and earthquake as God is about to be revealed in His glory.

4:6 Sea of Glass - This probably represents God’s holiness. It would also have the effect of reflecting the brilliant, gem-like light around the Father.

4:6 Four Living Creatures - A Jewish tradition states that the eagle is the mightiest bird, the ox is the mightiest domesticated animal, the lion is the mightiest wild animal, and the man is the mightiest of all. In this view, the four creatures represent creation.

4:6 Covered with Eyes - This probably signifies unceasing vigilance.

Words for Thought and Discussion

Chapter 5

5:1 Scroll with Writing on Both Sides - Papyrus scrolls were much more common for books than modern form with pages. The fibers of papyrus ran horizontally on the front side of the scroll, which made writing easier than on the reverse side where the fibers ran vertically. The writings on both sides may mean that the scroll is filled to overflowing and sealed to ensure its secrecy until the proper time.

5:6 Seven Horns and Seven Eyes - In the Old Testament the horn is a symbol for power, strength, or authority. Seven horns would symbolize full strength. Seven eyes would represent full knowledge or wisdom.

5:8 Harp and Incense - Normal features of Hebrew worship.

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Lesson 5 – Revelation 6-7
The Best is Yet to Come
The Seals and the Sealed

In this section, John recorded the opening of the first four seals; and as each seal was opened, one of the four living creatures summoned a rider on a horse. The horse imagery is probably related to the vision described in Zechariah 1:7–17. Horses represent God's activity on earth, the forces He uses to accomplish His divine purposes. Afterwards, two additional seals are opened totaling six. The center of His program is Israel, particularly the city of Jerusalem. God has a covenant purpose for Israel, and that purpose will be fulfilled just as He promised.

Chapter 6

Antichrist (vv. 1–2). Daniel states that there is a “prince that shall come,” who will make a covenant with Israel to protect her from her enemies (Dan. 9:26–27). In other words, the future world dictator begins his career as a peacemaker! He will go from victory to victory and finally control the whole world.

War (vv. 3–4). Antichrist's conquest begins in peace, but soon he exchanges the empty bow for a sword.

Famine (vv. 5–6). Famine and war go together. However, during the Tribulation, a man will have to work all day just to secure food for himself!

Death (vv. 7–8). John saw Death riding a pale horse and hades following him. Christ has the keys of death and hades, and both will one day be cast into hell.

The Martyrs (vv. 9–11). The Greek word *martus*, which gives us our English word *martyr*, simply means “a witness.” These saints were slain by the enemy because of their witness to the truth of God and the message of Jesus Christ.

The Earth-dwellers (vv. 12–17). The martyrs cried, “Avenge us!” but the unbelievers on earth will cry, “Hide us!” The opening of the sixth seal will produce worldwide catastrophes. All of nature will be affected.

Chapter 7

The Sealed Jews (vv. 1–8). In Scripture, a seal indicates ownership and protection. Today, God’s people are sealed by the Holy Spirit. This is God’s guarantee that we are saved and safe, and that He will one day take us to heaven.

The Saved Gentiles (vv. 9–17). You cannot read the Book of Revelation without developing a global outlook, for the emphasis is on what God does for people in the whole world. The Lamb died to redeem people “*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*” (Rev. 5:9). The great multitudes pictured here came from “*all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues*” (Rev. 7:9).

There is no doubt as to who this multitude is, because one of the elders explained it to John (Rev. 7:14): they are Gentiles who have been saved through faith in Christ during the Tribulation. While today, in most parts of the world, it is relatively easy to confess Christ, this will not be the case during the Tribulation, at least during the last half of it. Then, unless persons wear the “*mark of the beast,*” they will not be able to buy or sell; and this would leave them without even life’s bare necessities.

Read Revelation 6 and answer the following questions

1. Describe what John saw when the first seal opened. “The Conqueror” What do you think this rider represents?

2. Describe what John saw when the second seal opened? “Conflict on Earth” What do you think this rider represents?

3. Describe what John saw when the third seal opened? “Scarcity on Earth” What do you think this rider represents?

4. Describe what John saw when the fourth seal opened? “Widespread death on Earth” What do you think this rider represents?

5. What did John see when the fifth seal was opened? “The Cry of the Martyrs” (See Rev. 6:9-11) What did they request? What was given to them?

6. Revelation 6:9-11 was an important insight into God’s divine plan for John’s first-century readers experiencing persecution. Why is this an important insight for the believer today?

7. What happened when the sixth seal was opened? “Cosmic Disturbances” (See Rev. 6:12-14)

8. What effect did this have on people? What did they want the mountains and the rocks to do? Why? (See Rev. 6:16-17)

Read Revelation 7 and answer the following questions

9. Where were the four angels standing that John saw next? What were they doing? What power had been to them?

10. When the angel came from the east, what did he have? What have we learned about the importance and purpose of a seal?

11. Why is it important for us to know that God's servants will be sealed before He afflicts the land and the sea with the final judgements?

12. How many were sealed? What did this number consist of? (See Rev. 7:4-8)

13. Who does the elder identify as the great multitude? (See Rev. 7:13-14)

14. Where was the great multitude and what were they doing? What blessing did they receive? What did the Lamb and God do for them? (See Rev. 7:15-17)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 6 - Revelation 8-9
The Best is Yet to Come
Blow the Trumpets

Chapter 8

The opening of the seventh seal introduces the next series of judgments, the seven trumpets. In the Old Testament, trumpets were used to announce war, move the camp, announce the feasts and bring judgment. The trumpet sound is a symbol of power and authority.

The **First Trumpet** parallels the seventh plague of Egypt. Egypt was the center of a godless world system, so it is logical that the plagues in Moses day would be repeated on a worldwide scale during the Tribulation. The **Second Trumpet** affects the sea, turning one-third of it into blood and killing one-third of its creatures, as well as destroying one-third of the ships. The **Third Trumpet** affects the rivers, making their waters bitter. The great star of vs. 10 is known only to God, who calls the stars by their names. The **Fourth trumpet** brings about tremendous distress in the skies, for one-third of the light of the day is blacked out. The angel in vs. 13 is a literal messenger from God, giving warning to the world that the next three judgments would be even worse! We would think that men would listen to God's call and repent, but they continue to disobey.

Chapter 9

The **Fifth Trumpet** brings on the Locust from the bottomless pit. This fallen star (Satan) is described as a destroyer. He is king over the demons of hell. Scorpion like creatures now appear on the scene, with the power to hurt man for five months. It's interesting to note that scorpions are native to Israel, with some species growing to six inches in length. The **Sixth Trumpet** activates the four angels that are bound at the great river Euphrates. These four angels are prepared for "the hour, day, month, and year" on God's schedule, and it is their task to slay one-third of the earth's population. Once released, these angels bring into battle armies of horsemen totaling 200 million soldiers. This satanic cavalry is not like any other army either in appearance or in the weapons it uses. Fire, brimstone, and smoke are their chief weapons; they also have serpent-like tails. This army is commissioned to slay one-third of humankind.

Verses 20–21 give us a clear picture of what life will be like after the church is taken to heaven. There will be widespread idolatry. Idol worship is demon worship. Satan has always wanted mankind to worship him, and now he will receive that worship.

Read Revelation 8-9 and answer the following question

1. What happened when the 7th seal was first opened?

2. We are told that there was silence in Heaven for about half an hour (Rev. 8:1). This might not seem like a long time, but in Heaven it would seem like an eternity. In Rev. 4:8-11 we are told that Heaven is a place of constant worship and praise to God. Silence for half an hour is really a long time in Heaven. What do you think this pause is all about?

3. What were the 7 angels given? What is the purpose of the trumpets? (Rev. 8:2)

4. What did the Angel do with the fire from the altar? What was the result? (Rev. 8:5)

5. What happen when the first Trumpet sounded?

6. After a time of silence came prayer. How does God respond to the prayer of the saints? (Rev. 8:3-5)

7. How do the visions of the first six trumpets apply to us today? What lessons do they have for us about God, the Kingdom, suffering, patient endurance?

8. What message did the flying angel deliver? Define the word “woe” seen here. What do you believe is the purpose of repeating this word three times? Who did the woes refer to?

9. Only a third of the earth, the trees, the sea creatures, the drinking water, the sun, etc., are affected by the first four trumpets. The locusts are allowed to torture but not kill. The four angels are allowed to kill only a third of mankind. Why do you think God sends such radical plagues, yet limits them?

10. Do you think God is cruel to send such awful afflictions on the population of the earth? Why or Why not?

11. How do the inhabitants of the earth respond to the horrible but still limited plagues of the first six trumpets? What does that tell you about human character? Have you seen this attitude in people today? Explain (See Rev. 9:20-21)

Trumpets Revelation 8:6

Trumpets that herald the end of the age are a tradition with roots deep in the history of Israel. Trumpets were used to warn the people of an emergency and to summon them to battle. It was natural for the prophets to use them as a symbol to warn the people of approaching judgement. Trumpets were also used to herald gladness, festivals, leading up to the Day of Atonement. Joel uses the trumpet as a call to assembly of repentance to turn judgement into mercy. Finally, the trumpet on the last day heralds the deliverance of God's people and therefore the resurrection. Judgement, repentance, deliverance, salvation and new age are heralded by the trumpet sound. This reminds us that the use of the trumpet in ancient Israel was also to proclaim the accession of a king to the throne. Just as trumpets preceded God's presence at Mount Sinai, so the Jews expected His appearance at the end of the age to be heralded with trumpets. All this and more may be behind God's choice of trumpets to launch this series of judgements on the earth's population.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 7 - Revelation 10-11
The Best is Yet to Come
A Time For Testimony

Chapter 10

This chapter introduces us to the middle of the Tribulation period. According to Daniel 9:27, this is the time the Beast breaks his covenant with Israel and reveals himself in his satanic fury. The seventh trumpet will introduce the seven vials of the wrath of God, and the last three and one-half years of tribulation will get underway.

This mighty (messenger) Angel is most likely Jesus, the Angel of the Lord. Perhaps the best evidence that this angel is Jesus is in 11:3, where He says, "*I will give power unto My two witnesses.*" So, here He is, the Angel of the Lord, coming to announce that God is about to work speedily and finish His purposes on the earth.

In verse 8, it's not enough for John to just see this book in His hand, or even to know what it contains. The Word of God is our food. We must absorb it before it can do us any good. It is good to read the Bible and study it; but we also need to memorize the Word and digest it inwardly through the power of the Spirit. At this point, we are at the middle of the Tribulation.

Chapter 11

By now the Jewish temple has been rebuilt, and the nation is worshiping Jehovah again. It seems likely that the two witnesses will minister during the first half of the Tribulation, preaching to the Jews and having access to the temple. They will display God's power to unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, and many will be saved through their witness. They are called prophets as well as witnesses. They will announce to the world the great events to come. In the middle of the Tribulation, Antichrist will then, break his covenant with Israel and take possession of the temple area. He will set himself up as god, thus bringing about the "*abomination of desolation*" that both Jesus and Daniel predicted.

We have been waiting since chapter 8 for this “third woe” that was promised. The seventh angel sounds the trumpet, and great voices from heaven announce that the kingdom of this world is in Jesus’ power. This prophecy is followed by praise, as the elders glorify Him for His power.

The final three and one-half years of the Tribulation will climax the program of God. There will be delay no longer. The chapter begins with the temple on earth, and closes with the temple in heaven. “*Your wrath has come!*” is the statement of vs. 18, and this judgment will be fulfilled in chapters 15–16 when God pours out the vials of His wrath. The first three and one-half years are a period of tribulation, but the last three and one-half years are known as “the wrath of God.”

Read Chapter 10 and Answer the Following Questions

1. How does John describe the Angel he saw? Explain the meaning of this image?
2. What does the Angel hold in His hand? What do you think this represents?
(See Rev.10:2)
3. What does John hear? In response to what he hears, what does he attempt to do?
4. Compare Daniel 12:6-9 and Revelation 10:6-7. Why do you think there is now no more delay before God’s purpose is completed?

5. Why is the oath of Revelation 10:6-7 important for us to know about?
6. What do you think is symbolized by John eating the scroll of God's Words and finding it sweet in his mouth and sour in his stomach? (See Rev. 10:9-10) What lessons can we apply to our lives today from this?

Read Chapter 11 and Answer the Following Questions

7. What was John given, and what did he do with it?
8. What power was given to the two witnesses? For how long? Is there any purpose of them being clothed in sackcloth? What power do they have according to 11:6?
9. Who opposed the two witnesses? Where does he come from? What did he do to them? (See Rev. 11:7-8)
10. How were the dead bodies viewed and treated?

11. What eventually happens to the two witnesses after the three and a half day period? (See Rev. 11:11-12)

12. Look at Rev. 6:15-17 and Rev. 9:20-21, and compare them to Rev. 11:13. When the people give “*Glory to the God of heaven,*” are they truly repenting and turning to God? Explain your answer.

13. We might have expected the seventh trumpet to usher in the third woe. Instead, we see a heavenly worship breakout. What do you think this means? (See Rev. 11:15)

14. What have we read in past chapters about the 24 elders? What are they doing here? For what reason are they praising God?

15. Where else in Revelation have we read about God’s temple? What is the importance of it being open here in verse 19?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 8 – Revelation 12-13
The Best is Yet to Come
The Terrible Trio

Chapter 12

The theme of this chapter is conflict, with the forces of Satan opposing the people of God. These visions outline in an amazing way the major themes of the Bible. Some believe the woman mentioned in verse one is Mary, the mother of our Jesus. Genesis 37:9 indicates that the woman actually represents the nation of Israel. The dragon: “Satan”; and the heads, horns, and crowns refer us to 13:1 and 17:3, where the Beast (Antichrist) is described. In the middle of the Tribulation, Satan will be cast out of heaven to the earth. There is joy in heaven because Satan is defeated; but there will be misery on earth. Satan could not kill the woman's Son, so now he tries to exterminate her seed, the believing remnant of Israel. God takes His believing remnant to a special place of protection where Satan cannot penetrate. Satan's time is short (three and one-half years); then he will be cast into the bottomless pit.

Chapter 13

This chapter introduces us to the two beasts. They are persons that act like animals instead of humans. These verses present the “satanic trinity” (Satan, the Beast (Antichrist), and the False Prophet. The four beast's picture four successive kingdoms: Babylon (the lion), Media-Persia (the bear), Greece (the leopard), and the kingdom of Antichrist (the dreadful fourth Beast). The “little horn” of Dan. 7:8 is the Beast of Rev. 13, the Antichrist. Antichrist will need a helper to help him win the world. This evil helper will be the False Prophet. Worldwide worship is not the only goal of the False Prophet. He will also establish worldwide economic controls. He is Satan's “superman,” his false Christ.

We have reached the middle of the Tribulation in our study, but we are not yet ready for the return of the Lord. Before John revealed how the great drama will end, he paused to review great events yet to come, which will be our next subject. A Jesus rejecting system has invaded our world, and true believers must not be a part of it. We must reject false worship, that we may be found faithful to the Lord in these last days.

Read Chapter 12 and Answer the Following Questions

1. Explain the signs describing the woman in Rev. 12:1-2. What is she about to do?
2. What sign appears next? How is he described and what does he represent?
3. What does the dragon do to the woman and her child? When the Child is born, how is He described? (See Rev. 12:5) Who is this Child?
4. What great event followed? What was the outcome? Who is Michael? (See Rev. 12:7-9)
5. What did a loud voice state? Explain how salvation came. (See Rev. 12:10-11)
6. Who are “they” in Rev. 12:11 that have overcome the accuser? How have they overcome Satan?

7. Who did the dragon next try to persecute? What happened to her? (12:13-14)

8. Who did the dragon next turn his anger toward? Who are these people, and what is the point? (See Rev. 12:17)

Read Chapter 13 and Answer the Following Questions

9. Describe what John saw rising from the sea. How does this compare to Daniel 7?

10. What does this beast say? What does he do? What effect does this have on the saints? (See Rev. 13:5-7)

11. Who worships the first beast? Why? What is the relationship between the beast and the dragon? (See Rev. 13:4-8)

12. What are the traits of the second beast? What does it mean for the beast to look like a lamb, but to speak like a dragon? What other lambs appear in Revelation? (See Rev. 13:11-15)

13. The beast requires its followers to get a mark on their foreheads or right hands. Look again at Rev. 7:2-3. What do people have to choose between? What are the consequences of refusing the mark of the beast? How does this apply to us today? (See Rev. 13:16-18)

God Restrains Evil
Rev. 13:1-18
“From the Word in Life Study Bible”

The presence of pain, suffering, and evil in the world causes some people to wonder whether a good God exists, and if He does, why He doesn't put an end to it. John's vision of a beast rising up out of the sea and causing great havoc in the world does not explain why there is evil, but it does sound an important note of encouragement: the evils of the world happen only by "Permission" and those that do occur, have precise limits imposed on them by God. Notice that the beast "*was given authority to continue for forty-two months.*" Clearly God has placed restraints on evil. We have not and will not experience the full onslaught of pain and suffering that could be delivered. This restraining work of God can be seen in several incidents in the Old Testament.

1. Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:22-24)
2. The Flood (Gen. 6:5-8)
3. The Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9)
4. Job (Job 1:6-2:10)

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 9 - Revelation 14-15
The Best is Yet to Come
The Harvest is Coming

Revelation 14

God gives us a summary in this chapter, an overall view of the events that lie ahead in Revelation. The part of the 144,000 is now described. Marked with their Father's name, and not the name of the Beast, these believing Jews will be spiritually separated and dedicated completely to Jesus. Instead of worshiping the Beast, they follow the Lamb.

Today, God uses people to give His message; but in that last period of judgment, He will use angels as well. "*The everlasting Gospel*" presents God as the Creator, not the Savior, and warns that judgment is coming. It calls men to fear God and give glory to Him, not to the Beast and Satan. The fall of Babylon in verse 8 refers to the apostate religious political system headed up by the beast joined with the apostate world church. An angel now warns the world that all who wear the mark of the Beast will suffer eternal torments without rest or relief. John sees Jesus on a white cloud, coming with a sickle to reap the harvest of the earth. It is a picture of judgment.

The remainder of this chapter is a prophetic review of future events. There are some very practical lessons for us to learn. 1. God will establish His kingdom on earth in spite of Satan's opposition. 2. Those who reject the Gospel of the grace of God today will face awful judgment tomorrow. 3. The nations of the world are today taking the path to Armageddon. We see the rise of Europe and Egypt, and of the Asian nations. We see also the coming federation of Europe. But man's final war against God will end in complete failure for Satan and his cronies.

Revelation 15

We have met these saints before; they are the believers of the tribulation period who refused to bow their knees to the Beast and, as a result, lost their lives for the sake of Jesus. John sees them as victors, standing by the sea of glass.

In verse 1, the angels with the seven bowls carry the seven last plagues. In Rev. 10:7, Jesus had announced that with the pouring out of these bowls, the “*mystery of God*” would be completed and there would be no more delay. Seven angels come out of the temple. Seven is the number of completion. With seven angels delivering these Bowls of wrath, God’s judgments are completed on earth. Satan at this time is also pouring out terrible wrath upon believers, the Jews especially, but God will have the last word.

One of the living creatures delivers the bowls of wrath to the angels. The heavenly temple is now filled with smoke from the glory of God. No saint or angel could go into the temple to intercede for the nations of the world. God’s long-suffering had come to the end, and His judgment was about to fall.

Read Chapter 14 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What does John see in 14:1? Who does this refer to?
2. In 14:3 we are told they sang a new song before the throne. Who was present? What was the song? Who sang it?
3. What do we know about the 144,000 witnesses? (See Rev. 14:4-5)
4. Who had a message to preach? What is the “*everlasting gospel*”? Why is this gospel the good news? (See Rev. 14:6-7)

5. What happens to those who worship the beast and have his mark? (See Rev. 14:9-11)

6. In contrast to those who worship the beast and take his mark, what happens to those who die in the Lord? (See Rev. 14:13)

7. What is required of these believers in order to have this blessing?

8. Who appears in 14:14? What is He told to do? (See Rev. 14:17-20)

Read Chapter 15 and Answer the Following Questions

9. What did John see in the next sign? What is the importance of the number 7?

10. What is the song of Moses? What did those who sang this song say? (See Rev. 15:3-4)

11. What did John see in 15:5? What is the importance of the temple being open?
(See Rev. 15:5)

12. What came from the temple? Describe their clothes. Why is this important?
(See Rev. 15:6)

13. What was given to the angels? What do the golden bowls represent?

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 10 - Revelation 16
The Best is Yet to Come
Seven Bowls

This passage reminds us of the sixth plague of Egypt, when boils broke out on the Egyptians. The word “loathsome” (vs. 2) comes from an Old English word that means “troublesome.” God promised to send Israel this plague if they rebelled against Him; and no doubt the unbelieving Jews will suffer along with the unbelieving Gentiles. Notice that these sores will still be present when the fifth bowl is poured out. The affliction did not soften their hearts, men still blasphemed God and refused to submit before Him.

In verses 3-7 two of the bowls are now poured out. The second angel turns the sea to blood, and the third bowl turns the fountains and rivers to blood. During the trumpet judgment, only a third of the sea became blood; here we see the entire water system of the world polluted. Note that in vs. 7, the souls under the altar are now satisfied, God had answered their prayers and vindicated them.

The judgments from the fourth and fifth angels are now poured out. The fourth angel causes the sun to scorch men. Did sinners repent? No! It's amazing the hardness of the human heart. The fifth angel brings darkness. It is possible that this darkness covered only the immediate kingdom of the Beast, where his throne was located.

The judgement from the sixth angel is now poured out. God dries up part of the Euphrates to allow the armies of the kings of the east to meet with the armies of the nations of the world at Armageddon. The word “Armageddon” means “mountain of Megiddo.” This area has long been recognized as one of the world's greatest battlefields, and it is here that the battle will be fought between Jesus and Antichrist.

When the seventh bowl is emptied out, the throne and the temple of heaven unite in saying, “*It is done!*” The mystery of God is finished! The souls under the altar must no longer ask, “How long?” This announcement reminds us of Jesus' words on the cross, “*It is finished!*” When the new heavens and earth are ushered in, God will again say, “*It is done!*” (Rev. 21:6)

Read Chapter 16 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What were the seven angels told to do? What was the first bowl poured on? What happen?

2. What was the second bowl poured on? What happened?

3. What happened when the third bowl was poured out? What do bowls 2 and 3 represent?

4. What did the angel say to God in 16:5-7? Why was this judgement just and righteous? (See Rev. 16:7)

5. What was the fourth bowl poured out on? What happened as a result? How did the people react? (See Rev. 16:9)

6. What was the fifth bowl poured on? What happened as a result? What does this plague represent? (See Rev. 16:10-11)

7. What was the sixth bowl poured on? What happened as a result?
8. Where did the three unclean spirits come from? What are they compared to? What is their purpose and what do they do? (See Rev. 16:13-14)
9. How would God come? What does this mean? (See Rev. 16:15)
10. Where did the kings of the earth gather? What do we know that will happen there?
11. What was the seventh bowl poured on? What happened next?
12. What did Babylon represent? What happened there?

Men's Sunday Night live
Lesson 11 - Revelation 17-18
The Best is Yet to Come
Desolation & Destruction

Chapter 17

Chapters 17 and 18 introduce us to Babylon, which represents the last great world system before the return of Jesus. In chapter 17, the focus is on the religious part of the system, while in chapter 18, the commercial part is stressed. Religious Babylon will be overthrown by the Beast, while commercial Babylon will be destroyed by God. Since the seven bowls brought about the climax of God's wrath on the world, including the fall of Babylon, one of those angels now invites John to go to the wilderness to see "*the great whore*," the apostate world-system. This harlot represents the apostate world church of the latter days, centered in Rome. The name "Babylon" takes us back where the first organized rebellion against God took place. The name "Babel" means "confusion." The Babylonian system has been guilty of persecuting true believers ever since Cain killed Abel.

In the last days, a one world church will be formed. This world church (the harlot) will be involved in the political and economic affairs of the world and, with the help of the Beast, will become a great power. A union will exist between the nations of Europe, the Beast, and the world church. During the middle of the Tribulation, the Beast will want to have all power and worship for himself. This means he must get rid of the harlot, because she represents the worship of God, if even in an apostate way. Once the harlot is out of the way, the Beast will declare himself to be God and demand the worship of the nations.

Chapter 18

Here we read of commercial Babylon, which represents the great global system of the end times. Religious Babylon (the apostate church) will have a great part to play in the economics of the nations. When this religious system collapses, it will be the beginning of the end for the Beast's entire empire, although he will have three and one-half years yet to reign. Some of God's people are in this city, and God wants them to come out for two reasons: 1. The city will be destroyed and He wants them saved; 2. The city is satanic and He does not want them defiled. "*Come out!*" has always been God's call to His people, for salvation means separation from the world unto the Lord.

We now see two groups sorrowing over the fall of Babylon: the kings of the earth, and the merchants of the earth. They had “committed fornication” with Babylon by rejecting the true God and going after idols, money in particular. They sold their souls for wealth. Their luxurious living was now at an end. The casting down of the millstone in verse 21, indicates the suddenness of God’s judgment on the empire of the Beast.

Notice the repeated “*shall not*” statements in this chapter (verses 21-23). When God says “*shall not!*” there is nothing man can do to change it. We have seen the destruction of the Beast’s economic and religious empire. All that remains is for Jesus to destroy his satanic armies.

Read Revelation Chapter 17 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What did the angel say he would show John? What was her relationship to the kings? Describe her appearance? (See Rev. 17:1-4)
2. What name does she wear? What does she do to God’s people? (See Rev. 17:5-6)
3. How is the beast described? What did people think of the beast? Where did he come from? (See Rev. 17:8)
4. What do the 10 horns represent? What is their relationship to the beast? What do they do? (See Rev. 17:12-14)

5. What can we learn about God and the Lamb from the angel's words in Rev. 17:14, 17?

6. What is represented by the waters on which the harlot sits? (See Rev. 17:15)

7. What will the 10 horns do to the harlot? How does this fit who we believe the harlot is? (See Rev. 17:15-17)

8. What does the woman represent according to 17:18? What city would this be?

Read Revelation Chapter 18 and Answer the Following Questions

9. What did the angel predict would happen to Babylon? What reason is given for her fall?

10. What warning is given to God's people? For what reason should they listen to this warning? What can we learn about God's view of sin? (See Rev. 18:4-5)

11. How did Babylon live, and how did she view herself? What plagues would come upon her? (See Rev. 18:7-8)

12. Who else would mourn her fall? Where will the merchants stand, and what will they say? (See Rev. 18:11-16)

13. How did the angel symbolize the cities fall? What practices would cease in the city? How does this relate to the theme of Revelation? (See Rev. 18:21-23)

The Delusions of Luxury Revelation 18:1-24

Just as overeating can make a person sick and too much insulation in a home can trap toxic air inside, too much wealth can be dangerous to the moral and spiritual health of an individual, a city or a nation. In fact, Jesus warned about the “deceitfulness of riches” (Matt. 13:22). Luxury can easily lead us into spiritual carelessness, greed, and ultimate ruin.

Such is the case of Babylon in John’s vision of her fall. Historically Babylon achieved wealth, power, and dominance. It was known throughout the ancient world for plundering others for its own gain. Here in Revelation, Babylon is probably a symbol not only of Rome, but of a world system that operates in open rebellion against God.

But there is a heavy price to pay for the self-indulgent lifestyle that Babylon’s people live, and for the injustices they resort to in maintaining it. Cruelty and deception do not go unanswered: 1. The City becomes a dwelling place for demons. (18:2) 2. Her patterns of luxury become addictive, similar to alcoholism, sexual excess, and a lifestyle of greed. (18:3) 3. Insulated from pain, she lives in denial of her true condition. (18:4-8) 4. Her economic systems are taken away and her trading partnerships are dissolved. (18:11-18, 22-23) 5. All of her possessions disappear and ultimately, she is left desolate. (18:19)

What happens to Babylon is instructive for those of us who follow Christ, especially as we live in a culture of affluence.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 12 – Revelation 19
The Best is Yet to Come
The Lord's Victory

This chapter records the climax of God's wrath as Jesus comes to destroy the armies of the nations of the world. A great heavenly multitude proclaims four "Hallelujah choruses" here in anticipation of Jesus' return to earth. The word "hallelujah" means "Praise Jehovah."

In chapter 18, the merchants of earth and the kings mourned, because of the fall of Babylon, but here, heaven is rejoicing. Babylon was the source of all religious deception and confusion. It had also caused the death of multitudes of God's saints, and now has been destroyed. It seems that all of heaven's voices unite to praise God because He is God, and because He is on the throne. The words "*has come*" may be translated "has been completed." The bride is now the wife, and the marriage supper of the Lamb is now to be served. The one title that Jesus wants emphasized for all eternity is "*the Lamb*," for it speaks of His love for the church and the price He paid to purchase it.

This description of Jesus is thrilling! He is no longer on a humble donkey, but on a fiery white charger. His eyes are not filled with tears as when He beheld Jerusalem; nor is He wearing a mocking crown of thorns. Instead of being stripped by His enemies, He wears a garment dipped in blood, signifying judgment and victory. When on earth, He was abandoned by His followers; but here the armies of heaven follow Him in conquest. His mouth does not speak "*words of grace*," but rather the Word of victory and justice. He is King of kings and Lord of lords!

Two suppers are seen in this chapter: the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the supper of the great God, Armageddon. The first is a time of blessing and joy; the second is a time of judgment and sorrow. All of human history is moving rapidly toward Armageddon. The angel announces that the armies of earth will lose the battle. In fact, there will not be much of a battle, for Christ will destroy His enemies instantly.

Who are the armies gathered together against Jesus? These are the armies of the ten-kingdom federation of Europe, as well as the forces of the kings of the east, Egypt, and Russia. They gather in the Land of Megiddo, an area that Napoleon called the most natural battlefield in the world. The name "Armageddon" means "Mount of Megiddo."

Jesus destroys the armies with the Word, the sword that comes from His mouth. Men would not bow to His Word and receive the Gospel; now they must be slain by that same Word. The followers of the Beast are “marked men”; the mark of the Beast on their bodies seals them for certain judgment. Jesus not only destroys the armies of the Beast, but He also captures the Beast and False Prophet and casts them alive into hell. He also takes Satan and casts him into the bottomless pit.

Read Chapter 19:1-10 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What sound did John hear? What had God done to deserve such praise?
2. Why is the punishment of the wicked an act of praise? Should believers rejoice in the downfall of wicked people?
3. What event is causing gladness and rejoicing in verse 7? Who is the wife and in what sense would she “marry” the Lamb? What does this “marriage” refer to?
4. What is the meaning for you of the fact that Jesus’ relationship to the church is described as a marriage? As you think about the meaning of this, how can it affect your life more deeply?

5. What did John do to the angel? How did the angel respond? Why? (See Rev. 19:10)

Read Chapter 19:11-16 and Answer the following Questions

6. Who do you think the Rider is in verses 11-16? What characteristics of the Rider are mentioned?

7. What comes from His mouth? What will He do with it? (See Rev. 19:15)

8. What impressions of the Rider does this leave you with? What do all the symbols tell you about him?

9. In the light of Hebrews 4:12, why is it fitting that the Rider is called "*The Word of God*" in Revelation 19:13? How does this fit the situation of what He is about to do?

Read Chapter 19:17-21 and Answer the following Questions

10. Who is given an invitation in 19:17-18? What are they going to eat?

11. Who gathered for war in 19:19? Describe the two opposing armies?

12. What is your impression of the battle in 19:19-21? Does it seem to be much of a contest? Explain.

There is Hope for the Family Revelation 19:6-10

The fact that John's vision ends in marriage between Jesus and His bride, "the church" offers great hope to families. In this world, almost every family experiences some pain and suffering in its relationship. After all, families are made up of people who struggle under the burden of sin.

Of course, things were not intended to be that way. In the beginning, God instituted the family when He created Adam and Eve and joined them together as "one flesh." However, their sin and rebellion against God brought havoc into their relationship and into all subsequent families. In their own family they soon experienced violence as Cain murdered his brother Abel, causing an ongoing cycle of trouble. Even in a fallen world, however, God desires His best for the family structure. Scripture holds out great hope for the restoration of marriage.

God's original design for the family will not be destroyed. Right now, you may be experiencing the struggle of human relationships or even the pain of a broken home. You can take hope from the knowledge that God's healing and love ultimately win out. *"And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."* Rev. 21:4

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 13 - Revelation 20
The Best is Yet to Come
Two Resurrections

This is the “thousand years” chapter (mentioned six times here), which describes the Millennium. The word “millennium” means “thousand years” in Latin. The Battle of Armageddon is now over, and the Beast and False Prophet have been cast into hell. Jesus now lays hold of that old serpent, Satan, and casts him into the bottomless pit. After Satan is cast down, there is a resurrection of the Tribulation saints who gave their lives in faithful service to Him.

The millennial kingdom will be the divine rule of heaven upon earth. Jesus will rule with a rod of iron. Jerusalem will be the center of the kingdom, and the disciples will reign with Jesus. Israel will be in its land, sharing the glory of Jesus. There will be peace on earth among men and animals. At the close of the Millennium, many people will still give only outward obedience to Jesus but will not submit to Him from the heart. One of the main purposes of the Millennium is to prove that the sinful nature of man cannot be changed, even under a perfect rule in a perfect environment. For, at the end of the thousand years, Satan will be able to assemble a huge army to rebel. If people are not changed by the grace of God, nothing else will change them. The saints will reign with Jesus as kings and priests, and will serve Him in various capacities during the Millennium. Satan is loosed at the end of the thousand years, and he gathers a huge army to fight Jesus. These armies will attack the millennial Jerusalem, but fire from heaven will devour them. Satan will be captured and condemned eternally to the lake of fire.

John now sees a throne of judgment. It is great, because all of the sinners of history will stand before it. It is white because it represents the unchanging holiness of God. The Judge on the throne is Jesus. There is the Book of Life, containing the names of the saints. If a person's name is not found in the Book of Life, he or she is cast into hell. Also present is the book containing the deeds people have done. God is a Righteous Judge; He keeps a record of their deeds and will punish each one justly. Good works will not save sinners, but God will judge their works fairly and give them a just punishment in hell. Satan, and sin have been judged; human rebellion has been put down, now God can usher in the new heavens and earth.

Read Chapter 20:1-15 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What did John see in Rev. 20:1? What did the angel have?
2. What did the angel do to Satan? Why?
3. Christians are responsible for teaching, preaching, and spreading the gospel message worldwide. What is the judgment which has been given to them? (See Rev. 20:4)
4. Who are the “rest of the dead” in Rev. 20:5?
5. What blessing will those receive who have part in the first resurrection? How long will those who have part in the first resurrection reign with Jesus? (See Rev. 20:6)
6. When will Satan be released out of his prison? What will he do when released? (See Rev. 20:7-8)

7. What next happens to Satan and his followers? (See Rev. 20:9-10)

8. What will happen to earth and heaven at this time? (See Rev. 20:11)

9. What books will be used to judge mankind? What do we know about the Book of Life? (See Rev. 20:12)

10. What will happen to death and Hades? What does this say about the basic nature of death and Hades? (See Rev. 20:14-15)

11. What will happen to those whose names aren't written in the Book of Life? (See 20:15) What do we know about the lake of fire?

Will Evil Ever Get Its Reward? Revelation 20:1-15

Anyone who pays attention to today's headlines is likely to wonder whatever happen to ethics and justice. Sometimes it seems like fairness never happens in matters of business, government, the law, and world affairs. But for those who long to see justice reign, the bible offers powerful hope.

God will not turn His back on injustice. His character demands that He gives people what is coming to them. Moreover, Scripture promises that He will deal with evil in absolute, final ways. John's vision foresees that triumphant accomplishment.

- God will bind evil and cast it into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:2-3).
- He will place a seal on the source of evil (Rev. 20:3).
- He will administer judgement and restore believers who have been killed unjustly (Rev. 20:4).
- He will deal finally with Satan after allowing him one more attempt to deceive (Rev. 20:7-9). The devil's punishment will include eternal torment (Rev. 20:10, 14).
- The dead will stand before God and be judged (Rev. 20:11-15).

This picture offers tremendous hope to anyone concerned about the injustices of our world today. As we seek to deliver God's righteousness into our communities, workplaces and families, it's a relief to know that no human being, no matter how impartial and objective or biased and corrupt is the final judge. Ultimate justice will someday be administered by One who can be thoroughly trusted – The Lord God Almighty.

Men's Sunday Night Live
Lesson 14 – Revelation 21-22
The Best is Yet to Come
All Things New

Chapter 21

The theme of these two chapters is seen in 21:5: “*Behold, I make all things new!*” The Greek word for “*new*” means “new in character” rather than “new in time.” What amazing changes there will be when we enter eternity! God will dwell personally with His people in a glorious and intimate way. There will be no more tears, death, or sorrow. All of these came into the world through sin, but now the curse is removed. God’s “*It is done*” parallels Jesus’ “*It is finished.*” The same Lord who started creation will also finish it.

Verse 2 suggests that this heavenly city will hover over the earth during the Millennium, and then descend when the new creation is ushered in. The city is identified with God’s people; she is looked upon as a bride. After all, a city is not its buildings; it is the people who live in it. The new Jerusalem is that city. The tribes of Israel are named on the gates, and the twelve apostles are named on the foundation stones. The city is laid out as a square. The city measures about 1,500 miles each way, or two-thirds the size of the United States! The beautiful colors of the gems mentioned represent the precious grace of God.

Several things are missing from the city: a temple, natural light, and night. Since God dwells personally with His people, no temple is necessary. His glory replaces the glory of the sun, moon, and stars. Night in the Bible symbolizes death, sin, sorrow; these things are banished from the city forever. The gates will never be shut, so God’s people will have complete access to the city 24/7. This new earth will have nations. All the glory of these nations will be brought to God, where it belongs.

Chapter 22

In His new creation, God reverses all the tragedies that sin brought to the original creation. The old heaven and earth were plunged into judgment; this new heaven and earth are now blessed with perfection. Three times at the close of this book Jesus says, “*I am coming quickly!*” The word “quickly” suggests “swiftly.” It means that when these great events start to occur, there will be no delay. We do not know when Jesus will appear, but our part is to be ready.

These final verses present a plea, a prayer, and a promise. In vs. 7 and 12, the Lord has said, *“I am coming quickly!”* In vs. 17, the Spirit and the bride say *“Come!”* The Spirit prays through the church for the return of the Savior. Verses 18–19 are a warning against tampering with God’s Word. Satan loves for men to add to the Word or take from the Word. John’s warning applied specifically to the Book of Revelation, but certainly it includes all of the Word of God. What better way to end the book of Revelation than with the inspiring words we see in verse 20-21: *He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I Am coming quickly.” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen*

Read Chapter 21 and Answer the Following Questions

1. What are the new Heavens and the New Earth?
2. Revelation 21:4 renews the promise made in Isaiah 25:8 and 1 Corinthians 15:54. What do these promises mean to you?
3. What is the importance of Jesus saying, *“Behold, I make all things new.”*? (See Rev. 21:5)
4. What is available to mankind today because *“it is done”*? What, do you think it means that: *“I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.”* (Rev. 21:6)
5. What is important about John not seeing “a temple” in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple? (See Rev. 21:22)

6. What ideas are repeated several times in Rev. 21:11, 23, 25; 22:5? Why do you think this principle is repeated so many times?

7. What is meant by the fact that the cities gates will never be shut? For what reasons does a city shut its gates? (Rev. 21:25)

Read Chapter 22 and Answer the Following Questions

8. Where does the water of life flow from? What grows along the river?

9. What did Jesus say He would do? What blessing is given? (See Rev. 22:6-7)

10. Name the characteristics of the “blessed” person in Revelation. (See 1:3, 14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7, 22:14)

11. What is meant by Jesus being the “Root” and “Offspring” of David (See 22:16)

12. How might people in the world today, violate the warning seen in 22:18-19?

13. What promises did Jesus give in closing this book? (See Rev. 22:20)

Fresh Fruit Salad
Great Word from the Word in Life Study Bible
Revelation 22:2

When you think of the new heavens and the new earth that God will someday create, what images come to mind? John's vision includes a unique species of tree, the tree of life that bears twelve kinds of fruits. A different fruit for every month. *"In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations."*

Trees that produce will afford little rest for the workers who cultivate and harvest them. Yet surely these fruit pickers will be happy because the text also says: *"there shall be no more curse."* Work will be free of the painful toil and drudgery that now characterizes it. This view of the new creation, with delightful work and enjoyable results, is very similar to the description of God's future society in Isaiah 65:16-23. There the picture includes:

Joy and rejoicing: (65:16)

An end to weeping and crying: (65:19)

Building and living in one's own house: (65:21)

Owning, planting, and enjoying the fruits of one's vineyard: (65:21-22)

Enjoying the works of one's hands: (65:22)

An end to laboring in vain or bringing children into a world of trouble: (65:23)

These statements from Revelation and Isaiah recall the original design that God had for His creation, a creation that was "very good." God created people to be His coworkers in managing the resources of His world for the benefit of all. God will be faithful to restore that ideal. As Paul promised, the world will be free from all its suffering, futility, and bondage to corruption and to be made again to fulfill its original design. What a hope to look forward to, the reign of God over a joyful new world where trouble free families work painlessly together and enjoy "**Fresh Fruit Salad**" month after month.