

# ***Sabbath School Today***

## **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

### ***Preparation for the End Time***

#### **Lesson 3. Jesus and the Book of Revelation**

It is unfortunate that many people have been taught to fear the Book of Revelation, thinking that it is a study only for the most advanced Bible students and theologians. To hold such an idea is to overlook the opening line of the Book—"the Revelation of Jesus Christ." The message contained in the last book of the Bible is the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:2). It is His own personal account about Himself that He gave to the Apostle John, who in turn wrote what was revealed to him so the whole world may know the marvelous story of Christ's intercession for the human race. All who read it and understand its message receive a blessing. Revelation is meant for us living at the end of our world's history because "the time is at hand" (Rev. 1:3).

In the Book of Revelation, Christ is revealed to us through the imagery of the heavenly sanctuary. In the opening scene He is walking in the first apartment among golden candlesticks, enrobed with the garments of the high priest. In this capacity, Christ sends His message of judgment against the church down through the ages, giving counsel and admonition that was intended to guide and encourage those who heeded the message of the "Faithful and True Witness," who has revealed the end to us from the beginning (chapters 2, 3, 6, 8, and 9).

In chapters 4 and 5, Christ is portrayed as the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), being presented before the throne of God as the atoning sacrifice for lost humanity (Rev. 5:11-13). His high priestly work on the day of atonement is found in Revelation chapter 14 beginning with the three angels' messages that call the world to forsake the apostasy of spiritual Babylon and worship the Creator by keeping His Commandments through the power of Jesus' own faith. When the truth of Christ and His righteousness is believed with all the heart, the heavenly sanctuary will be cleansed through the work of Christ's Spirit, transforming the lives of all who believe in the power God to destroy sin.

As Christ closes His ministry, the most holy place will be opened in heaven, and there will be "seen in His Temple the ark of His testament" that contains His eternal Law, vindicating the Sabbath of the fourth Commandment (Rev. 11:19). All the world will be without excuse as the mighty fourth angel makes one final plea as Christ closes His most holy apartment ministry, saying, "Babylon is fallen! Come out of her My people and be not partakers of her sins" (Rev. 18:1-4).

But the enraged wicked repent not of "their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. 9:21). Realizing they are eternally lost, they flee from "the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the

great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16, 17). From beginning to end, the Book of Revelation is about Jesus Christ our Righteousness.

The message sent from heaven to the church through A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner in 1888 is also a revelation of Jesus Christ and His closing intercession for the human race. At the time God gave His "most precious message" to His "delegated messengers" [1], the world was on the brink of the final fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The Stone of Daniel chapter 2 verses 35 and 45 was about to "smash in pieces" the world that was fast filling its cup of iniquity. Michael was prepared to stand up in defense of His faithful remnant (Dan. 12:1). The four angels holding the "winds of strife" anticipated the command to release their restraining hands (Rev. 7:1, 2), that the final events of chapter 16 could rush upon the world drunken with its wickedness.

The anticipated "Sunday law" that would fulfill Revelation 13:11-17 was moving through the United States Congress as the "Blair Bill," authored by Senator Henry W. Blair of New Hampshire. Senator Blair's purpose for the bill was to assert the right of the state to "protect the people" so they could carry out their duty to God. His law was written to assure the preservation of the "Lord's Day" for "the benefit of the people." The intended effect was to "enhance the 'Sabbath' " by instituting a civil law to restrain Sunday activities carried out by people who did not recognize their duty to God, and who thus had a corrupting influence on society.

Yes, in 1888 the "toes" of Daniel's metal man statue were hanging over the edge of eternity. All heaven was on alert for the imminent return of Christ to this earth to rescue His people from the final crisis, and whisk them away to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Heaven's angels were ready to sing the anthem, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7).

There was only one problem: Christ's bride was not ready. She had not that robe of righteousness that is necessary for admission to the marriage supper (see Matt. 22:1-14). Therefore, Christ issued His appeal: "I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18).

The *Quarterly* points us to 1 Corinthians 10:1-11. These verses are "for our admonition"—they are a warning to us that we not repeat the sins of the ancient Israelites in doubting and rejecting God's leading as He works to purify to Himself a people fit to enter the Promised Land. The message God sent to prepare His church in 1888 was to purify a people and fit them for translation and admission to the marriage supper. "The truth is to elevate, to cleanse, to purify, to sanctify, to fit us for translation, prepare us for the company of holy angels, sinless beings in the kingdom of God." [2] However, that message of truth was disputed, maligned, and rejected.

“The reception given to God’s servants in past ages is the same as the reception that those today receive through whom God is sending precious rays of light. The leaders of the people today pursue the same course of action that the Jews pursued. They criticize and ply question after question, and refuse to admit evidence, treating the light sent to them in the very same way that the Jews treated the light Christ brought to them.” [3]

”In rejecting the message given at Minneapolis, men committed sin. They have committed far greater sin by retaining for years the same hatred against God’s messengers, by rejecting the truth that the Holy Spirit has been urging home. By making light of the message given, they are making light of the word of God. Every appeal rejected, every entreaty unheeded, furthers the work of heart-hardening, and places them in the seat of the scornful.” [4]

“I would speak in warning to those who have stood for years resisting light and cherishing the spirit of opposition. How long will you hate and despise the messengers of God’s righteousness? God has given them His message. They bear the word of the Lord. ... But there are those who despised the men and the message they bore. They have taunted them with being fanatics, extremists, and enthusiasts. Let me prophesy unto you: Unless you speedily humble your hearts before God, and confess your sins, which are many, you will, when it is too late, see that you have been fighting against God.” ... “I have no smooth message to bear to those who have been so long as false guideposts, pointing the wrong way. If you reject Christ’s delegated messengers, you reject Christ. Neglect this great salvation, kept before you for years, despise this glorious offer of justification through the blood of Christ, and sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.” [5]

Is there any Good News? Yes!—“His wife hath made herself ready!” (Rev. 19:7) is a promise that the marriage will not forever be delayed. Corporate solidarity between Christ (our divine Husband) and the “wife” (God’s remnant church) that leads to the consummation of the marriage, can only develop as a result of true, heart-wrenching corporate repentance.\*

Moses speaking for the Lord, prophesied, “If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers ... then will I [God] remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember” (Lev. 26:40, 42). The final fulfillment of the everlasting covenant is contingent upon corporate repentance. When we understand this it will bring forth in our lives a total transformation of our attitude toward salvation, justification, and righteousness by faith. Then Christ’s longed-for “at-one-ment”—that corporate solidarity that forever binds our willing hearts to God—will be accomplished. [6]

Finally, the angel can exit the Temple in heaven and cry with a loud voice to Him that is upon the cloud, “Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: ... for the harvest of the earth is ripe” (Rev. 14:15). The “Faithful and True Witness,” no longer our high priest but clothed in kingly garments and mounted on a white horse, will “make war” against all the wicked of

the earth, coming down from heaven as the “KING of kings, and LORD of lords” at the head of God’s avenging army. “For He hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication,” and [He will avenge] “the blood of His servants at her hand” (Rev. 19:11-16, 2).

The Book of Revelation is Christ from beginning to end: Christ counseling, pleading, guiding, calling, warning, judging, and all the while revealing to us His work as our high priest in the heavenly sanctuary as He is bringing this world’s history to its conclusion.

Let all God’s people shout, Alleluia and Amen!

—Ann Walper

---

\* Corporate repentance is the recognition that had we been at the foot of the cross with the rejecting Jews, and had we been at Minneapolis in 1888 with the mocking leadership of the church, we would have done exactly the same things as took place there in killing and rejecting our Savior. We are just as sinful and guilty in our hearts, and are in need of a deep, soul-searching repentance. This is the essence of Christ’s call to the Laodicean church found in Revelation 3:14-22.

**Endnotes (Ellen G. White):**

[1] See *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92, 96, and 97.

[2] *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 5, no. 324, p. 291.

[3] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 911; article read at the 1890 General Conference Session held at Battle Creek.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 913, 914.

[5] *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 96, 97.

[6] See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/kQVQGHAYtH0>

You may subscribe to the e-mail version of *Sabbath School Today* by sending a request to [sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org](mailto:sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org)