

Worship Lesson 13, 3Q 2011

Worship in the Book of Revelation

What are your thoughts about the lesson title?

When you think of worship in Revelation what comes to mind?

What is the basis of our worship? Is it not the truth about God, who He is, the experience we have and knowledge we have of Him?

While our personal journey, and thus our “song” will be different as we will each be brought through and out of different difficulties and trials, won’t we all be brought to the same God?

And, ultimately, won’t our worship be based on the same truth of who God is?

Hasn’t the entire controversy been over this issue? Is it any different in Revelation?

In general, has Revelation made it easier for most people to get a true picture about God, or has Revelation created difficulties for people?

To the degree any misunderstanding of God has come from Revelation, why has that happened? Could it be that people have failed to recognize the symbolic nature of the text and instead have taken certain passages concretely – like Revelation 14?

Do we let the Bible interpret itself or do we project into the Bible our own preconceived ideas?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "Perhaps one of the greatest..."

Facts about our universe:

- Our sun is about 865,000 miles in diameter, talk about big, that makes it equivalent to about 109 planet Earths.
- It is estimated that the Milky Way galaxy contains 200-400 billion stars.
- It is estimated that the universe contains 100-500 billion galaxies, with each galaxy containing anywhere from 10 million to 1 trillion stars. If we just averaged each galaxy containing 100 billion stars, then 100-500 billion galaxies multiplied by 100 billion stars is a number I can't even imagine.
- The Andromeda Galaxy is our closest neighboring galaxy and is 2.5 million light years away. One light year equals 5,878,625,373,183 miles (about 6 trillion miles). So multiple 6 trillion by 2.5 million to get the rough distance. And it is estimated that Andromeda contains 1 trillion stars.

And, as the Study Guide points out, something greater than the cosmos built the cosmos. Can your mind even comprehend it?

God is amazing – and because He is so amazing, so infinite, so beyond our finite capacities to consider, some humans conclude God simply cannot exist. So, what do they do to deal with the origins of the universe? Rather than believe in an intelligent being who created, they postulate that at one point in universal history there was nothing, no time, energy, matter, space, gravity, molecules, life, nothing at all and from this nothing an explosion happened from which everything emerged, and they call that reasonable.

What can we do to keep our minds aware of God as our creator and our relationship to Him?

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to consider various texts in Revelation and the reasons cited for worship.

Read Revelation 4:8-11:

Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

What reason are they worshipping God?

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - 2006 news report:

Nearly 450 Christian churches in the United States yesterday celebrated the 197th birthday of Charles Darwin. The churches say Darwin's theory of biological evolution is compatible with faith and that Christians have no need to choose between religion and science. Some churches sang praises for "tall boiling test tubes" and "classrooms and labs." Many churches held adult education and Sunday school classes on evolution, and ministers preached that followers of Christ do not have to choose between biblical

stories of creation and evolution... A variety of denominational and non-denominational churches, including Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Unitarian, Congregationalist, United Church of Christ, Baptist and a host of community churches, participated in the event... [M]ore than 10,000 Christian ministers... sign[ed] a letter urging school boards across the country to “preserve the integrity of the science curriculum by affirming the teaching of the theory of evolution as a core component of human knowledge.”ⁱ

- Is this truth under attack in the SDA church?
 - How?
 - Do you find it credible that God created by evolutionary mechanism? Why not?
 - How do you explain the age of the universe being billions of years but the Biblical record suggesting life on earth is only 6,000-10,000 years old?
 - How do we explain Carbon dating of life 50,000 years? Or rocks billions of years?
- Genesis is not a record of creation of the entire universe, only of our solar system. The universe was created before our solar system, i.e. earth and mankind. Job 38:4

Read Revelation 5:8-14:

What reason are they worshipping Christ? The Lamb was slain and what is He now worthy to receive? Power and honor and glory? What is the connection between the Lamb being slain and His being worthy to receive power and honor?

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - By twisting the meaning of the Cross away from a revelation of God’s character and achievement of a purified humanity, to pay a legal penalty. That God must inflict penalties and therefore executed His Son, and God will use His power to inflict pain and

suffering on all those who don't accept the legal penalty paid.

Read Revelation 7:9-12:

What reason is given for worship here?

Christ has saved humanity, saved those terminal in sin.

- How is this truth under attack as time comes to a close?
 - He isn't the Savior only, but the destroyer of those who won't love Him
 - Christ receives power to use a rod of iron to dominate and destroy His enemies
 - March 5, 2006 Louis Farrakhan We are living at a time that was described by Jesus in these words: "If those days were not shortened for his elect sake, no flesh would be saved." We know that we have now entered that period when we witnessed a tsunami killing over 200,000 people in Asia; an earthquake in Pakistan; storms raging throughout America, fire on one side, water on the other, snow, cold, ice in between...

At the townhall meeting in New Orleans, I pointed out the high Black-on-Black crime rates, rebellion against the will and law of God, and the love of partying and acting foolishness that prevails in the city. I asked them if they did not think that Allah (God) would handle the city as He did two ancient cities that lived in rebellion. I told them Allah (God) brought a punishment to America, but He also brought a punishment to Black people, and that punishment is going to spread. There will be many more disasters that we are not prepared for in this country.

This country glories in its cities and skyscrapers, but Allah (God) is going to bring

them down. We are going to know that He is God. ..

The Bible says that in His Second Coming, He will have a sword dripping with blood in His hand. He is not coming back to teach. He is coming back to kill the enemies of His teaching and set up a new government.

- Love me or I will kill you

Read Revelation 11:15-19:

The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said:

“The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever.”

¹⁶ And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, ¹⁷ saying:

“We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

¹⁸ The nations were angry; and your wrath has come. The time has come for judging the dead, and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great— and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”

¹⁹ Then God’s temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the ark of his covenant. And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Why are they worshipping here?

Because Christ kingdom consumes and puts an end to the kingdom of the world – i.e. Christ’s kingdom of love finally eradicates the infection of selfishness, an end to sin, death, disease, deviations from God’s design for life, an end to all pain and suffering!

How has this idea been corrupted and distorted as we approach the end of time?

- God’s judgment determines who will be saved and who will be lost – i.e. in a courtroom type scenario
- God’s use of power inflicts the punishment upon sinners for their behavioral crimes and causes them to suffer and die

The Greek for judging in the passage means “determining” or “selecting” or “choosing” or “to separate” or “to pick out”. So the time has come for God to separate the dead, to pick out from the dead those who are healed from those who are not, separating sheep from goats, etc. This does not mean a time when a court sits, evidence is presented, a jury debates and a decision of innocence or guilt is rendered. It does mean a time when God simply acknowledges, who has accepted Christ and experienced transformation and healing and who has not.

Thus the text says the time has come to select those from the dead who have accepted Christ so they can experience their reward of eternal life!

Regarding destroying those who destroy the earth, it means to consume, put an end to, remove sinfulness from the earth. It doesn’t say how, just that He does. So we must look to the rest of scripture to understand how God brings an end. And how does He do it?

To sin, wherever found, "our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29. In all who submit to His power the Spirit of God will consume sin. But if men cling to sin, they become identified with it. Then the glory of God, which destroys sin, must destroy them. DA 107

What do you hear this passage saying? What is it that causes death? Is it the fire of God's presence? If so why can the angels and the saved live in His presence if His presence destroys? What is the only thing His presence destroys? Sin – thus is the source of death God or is the source of death, sin? God destroys death by destroying sin!

Read Revelation 15:1-4:

I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues—last, because with them God's wrath is completed. ² And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God ³ and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
King of the ages.

⁴ Who will not fear you, O Lord,
and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

What is the reason for worship in this passage?

- God's holiness
- God's justice

- God's right ways
- God's wrath is complete

How has this been distorted and misrepresented as we approach the end of time?

- God's wrath is an active process in which He inflicts pain and suffering upon His creatures
- God's justice is using power to punish
- The seven last plagues result from God using power to inflict pain upon sinners

What is the truth

- Romans 1:18-31 – God's wrath is letting go
- The seven last plagues are a result of God granting freedom and letting go, not an infliction
 - Revelation 7:1-3
 - "I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reprovcs, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.

It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of."

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- Worship results from God using power to put down rebellion and driving all beings by fear of punishment
 - Zech 4:6 not by might nor by fear but by the spirit says the lord

Read Revelation 19:1-5:

After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

“Hallelujah!

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
² for true and just are his judgments.

He has condemned the great prostitute
 who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.

He has avenged on her the blood of his servants.”

³ And again they shouted:

“Hallelujah!

The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever.”

⁴ The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

“Amen, Hallelujah!”

⁵ Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

“Praise our God,
 all you his servants,
 you who fear him,
 both small and great!”

What is the reason for worship? God is right, His ways and methods have been proved true. The false system has been exposed and an end to sin and sinners has been experienced!

How has this been corrupted and distorted as we approach the end of time?

- The Great Controversy doesn't exist
- God was not accused by Satan
- God has no need to prove His character or trustworthiness
- Sin is a willful choice to rebel against God without Satan deceiving
- God merely must pay the legal penalty and punish those who remain in rebellion

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "From the introduction..." thoughts?

It is a matter of worship, what do you understand the main issue in this battle to be about? Why does it matter?

Read second paragraph, "From the beginning..." thoughts?

What are Satan's methods as practiced by the beast system?

What is the common Christian teaching on what Christ/God will do when He returns? What is the common Christian teaching regarding what methods God will employ in dealing with the wicked in the end? How is the common teach attributed to God different than what the Bible says the beast will use?

Is it possible the common teaching in Christianity regarding how God treats sinners in the end, is in actuality the methods of Satan, the beast system? Is it how Christianity is preparing the world to accept Satan's counterfeit to Christ?

Could our church be caught up in this?

WEDNESDAY

Middle dark section, Read, "Read Revelation 14:6-12..."

Thoughts?

What is the message of the three angels? What are we to be telling the world? Has this message been corrupted? How?

THURSDAY

The lesson calls us back to worship of the true God, and emphasizes its importance, an excellent insight in paragraph five, “And that is because...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3

ⁱ http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_060213evolution.shtml