



REVELATION

worthy is the lamb

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BIBLE VERSES

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Published by Christ Community Church, © 2020
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REVELATION

part two: worthy is the lamb

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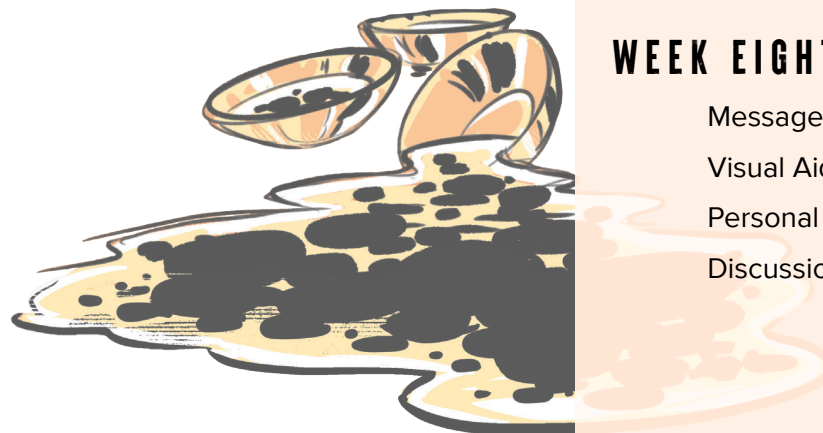
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A vertical orange banner with a complex, abstract pattern. The pattern consists of various geometric shapes, including circles, lines, and dots, some of which are filled with horizontal or diagonal hatching. The colors range from light orange to dark brown. The text 'WEEK FIVE' is centered in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The banner is positioned on the right side of a white background.

WEEK FIVE

MESSAGE NOTES | SEPTEMBER 6

Take It to the Horizon

VISUAL AID

UNREACHED PEOPLE (NOT LAND MASSES!)

Geographic maps skew our perception of the task: Huge unpopulated areas look like a priority, while geographically small regions with huge populations (like Bangladesh and Java) are overlooked, and the diverse populations of single but large countries (like India and China) are under-represented. This world map is a cartogram based on 2020 population estimates—every square represents 100,000 people, shaded by percentage Evangelical.

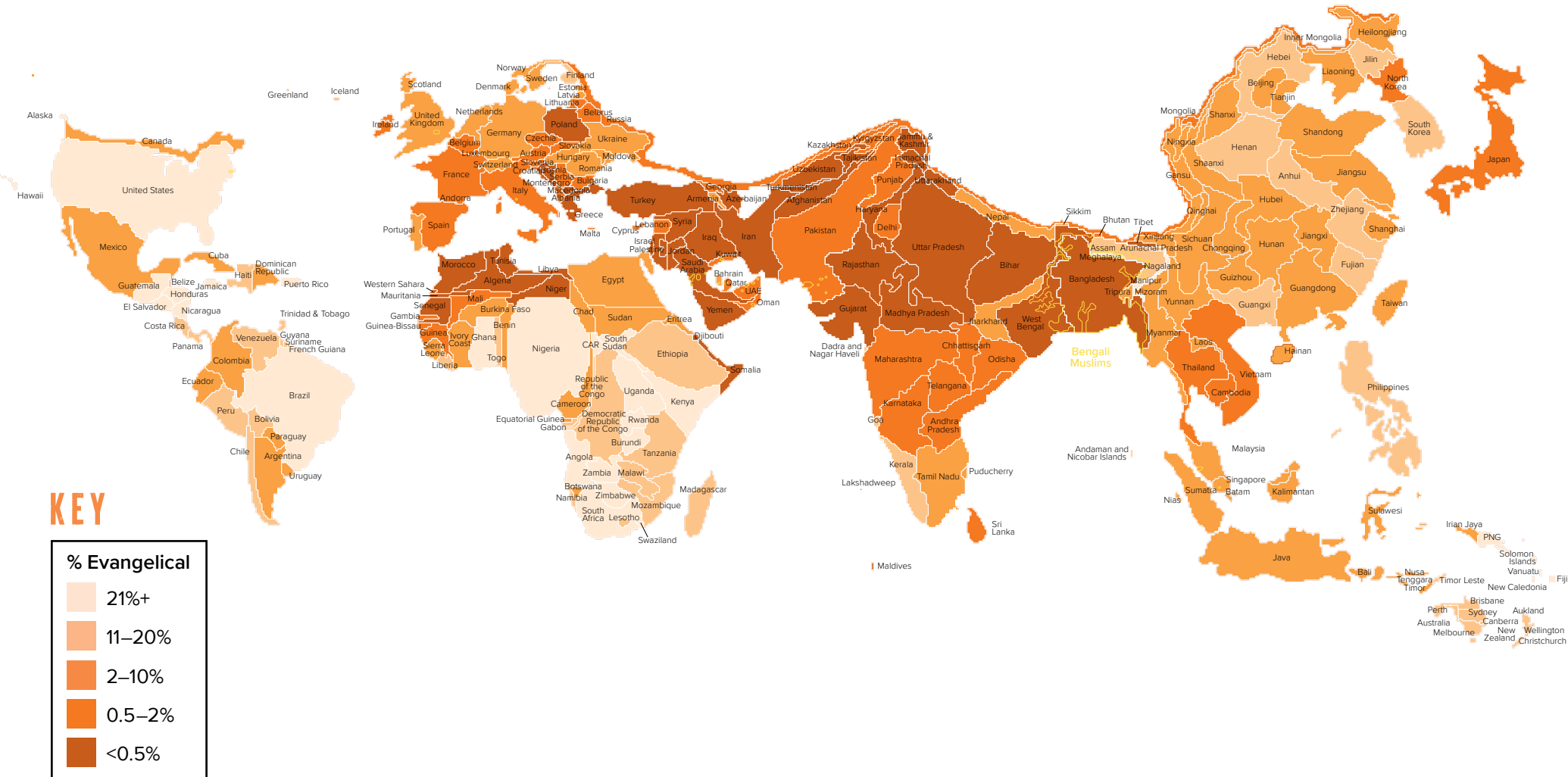
The original map can be viewed or downloaded online at cccomaha.org/revelation.

**IF THE GREAT COMMISSION
IS ABOUT PEOPLE, WHY DO
WE REPRESENT IT WITH
GEOGRAPHIC MAPS?**

VISUAL AID

UNREACHED PEOPLE (NOT LAND MASSES!)

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

written by dawn gentry

Note: There are no devotions for week five. Instead, we invite you to catch up on any devotions from Weeks 1–4 or spend time preparing for Week 6.

A TESTIMONY TO ALL NATIONS

(Matthew 24:14)

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

Acts 10, 1 Corinthians 15

INTRODUCTION

During this week's sermon, you had the opportunity to hear from Carey, one of our international workers in Gold Kingdom. We will also look at Peter's first-century example of sharing his testimony with Cornelius, a Gentile. Peter, Paul, and other apostles realized the importance of reaching those who were different than themselves because of the power of Christ's resurrection. We too are witnesses to that power and share their mission of going "to all nations" to reach one more for Christ.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Share about a time when an answered prayer had a significant impact on your life.

Share about a specific missionary you support through prayer.

READ ACTS 10:25-48

Discussion questions

- In verse 31, Cornelius was told "God has heard your prayer..." Across the world, many pray to hear the Good News. How might those prayers be answered through our *giving*? How might they be answered through our *going*?
- God "accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (v. 35). When is the last time you had a significant conversation with someone who is different from you (racially or culturally)? Why is this often challenging?
- How can we expand our friendship circles to reach those who are different than us? Why is this important?
- Verse 38 tells us that Jesus' own power to do good and heal was because "God was with him." Share an example of when

you recognized that God was with you and this knowledge gave you the boldness to do good, to seek justice, and/or to speak up.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11, 50-58

Discussion questions

- Paul describes the gospel as something which we **received** and on which we have **taken our stand**. He also reminds us that through the gospel we are **saved**, if we **hold firmly** to it. Which of these four phrases is most significant to you? Why?
- Verses 3–8 show that for Paul, the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead was central to his understanding of the gospel, saying "this is what we preach" (v. 11). How does your own belief in the resurrection affect your willingness and ability to share the gospel with others? Why does that matter?
- How does our hope in the resurrection affect our understanding of and anticipation for the second coming of Christ?
- Read Matthew 24:10–13 alongside 1 Corinthians 15:58. How do you live out "standing firm" in your own life?

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray about opportunities to serve with international students and/or participate in a cross-cultural mission trip. If you sense God calling you to go, talk about it with your group. For a list of upcoming CCC mission trips, visit cccomaha.org/stm.
- Pray for missionaries God brings to mind. For a list of missionaries and international workers supported by CCC, visit cccomaha.org/missionaries.



WEEK SIX

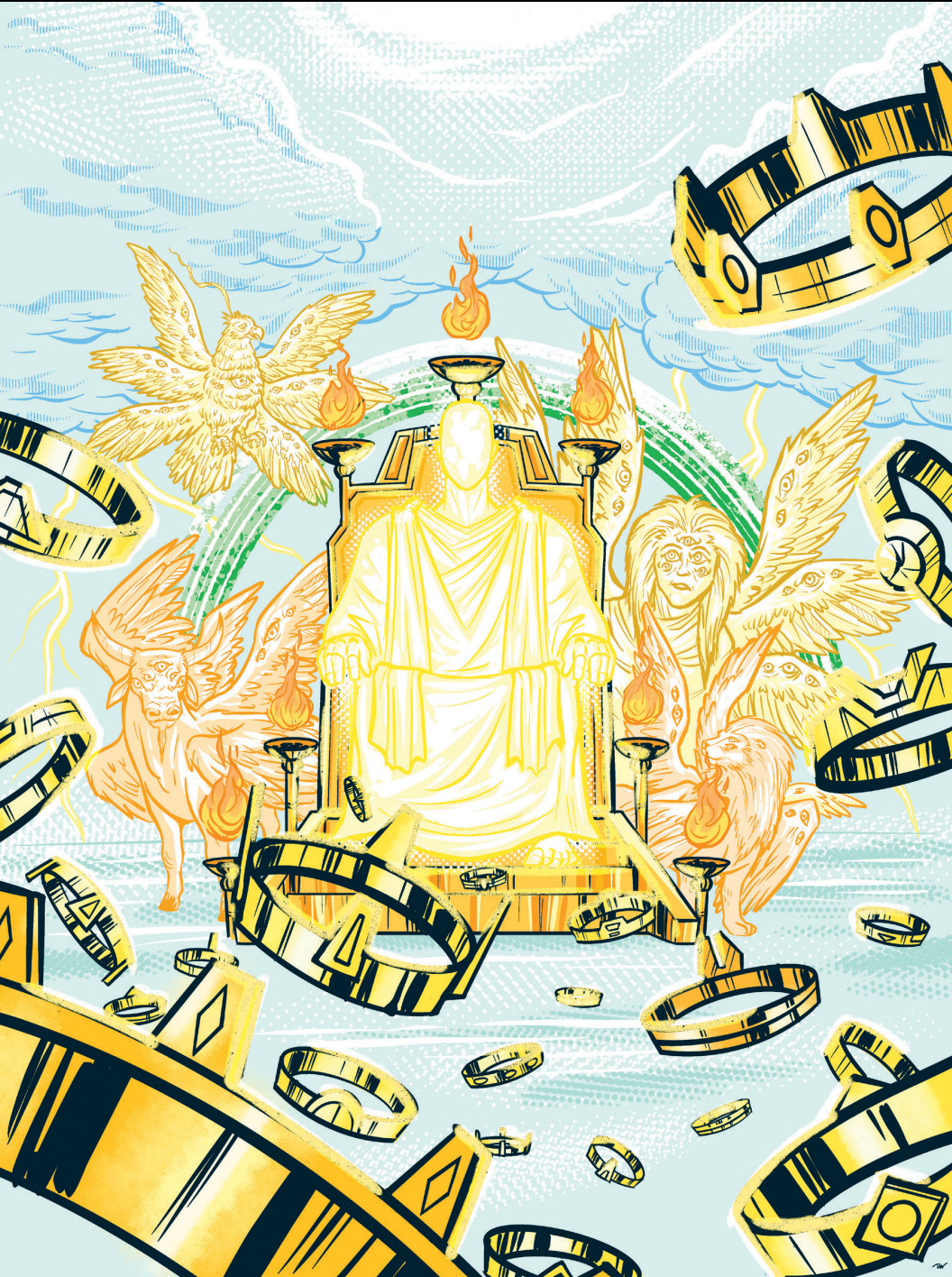
MESSAGE NOTES | SEPTEMBER 13

What Is Heaven Like? (The Throne)

VISUAL AID

WORSHIP SCENE ILLUSTRATION

This illustration is available to download at ccomaha.org/revelation.



PERSONAL DEVOTIONALS

written by caleb baumann

DEVOTIONAL DAY ONE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 4

“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And he who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”—Revelation 4:2–3 (NASB)

REFLECTION

In the Spirit, John experiences the throne room of Heaven. The central focus of the room is the One seated on the throne. The sight is so glorious that it can only be conveyed in terms that require us as readers to engage our imaginations. The throne reminds us that God is the righteous judge who rules above all things, seen and unseen. No one can match or contend for his position as God of the universe. He alone sits in royal rest, authorizing all things from the glory of his throne.

The glory of God’s throne, however, is outdone in glory by God himself. This assures us that the One seated on the throne is indeed worthy of the throne. God is not like the rulers of this world. God is not tempted by selfishness or crushed under his responsibilities. Though we have seen leaders of this world corrupted by power and abuse their subjects, God will never fail to perfectly perform his heavenly duties because he is perfect. His majesty and beauty assure us that he deserves every bit of the authority he wields. The rainbow reminds us that he has been faithful to his covenant with Noah to judge patiently and compassionately. We do not have to shy away from God’s judicial qualities because God is a good judge.

QUESTIONS

1. Meditate on God’s attributes found in Scripture. In your experience, which of God’s qualities are you quick to embrace and which qualities might you tend to deemphasize? Why?
2. How can you know and embrace God for who he truly is?

PRAYER

God, I want to see you and know you for who you really are. Thank you that I do not have to be afraid of what I’ll find as I get to know you. Let me throw off any inhibitions that keep me hidden from your face. Thank you for revealing yourself to me through your Word by your Spirit. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY TWO

DAILY READING: REVELATION 4

“I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’”—Revelation 4:1 (NASB)

REFLECTION

The resound of a trumpet, a thunderous crash, and roaring waters are just a few of the ways in which the voice of God is portrayed (Exodus 19:19, Ezekiel 43:2). These uses of reverse personification make the point that when God speaks, he speaks with power. God does not speak in meaningless exhales or lifeless instructions, but in spirit and in truth. He reveals himself by his Word, and his word is accompanied by power to accomplish that which it purposes (Isaiah 55:11).

Jesus told us that God’s words are spirit and life (John 6:63). We see the truth of this statement throughout scripture. It was by God’s spoken utterance that the heavens and the earth and all that is in them came into being (Genesis 1). It was by God’s authoritative, spirit-filled breath that Adam and Eve were defined and empowered to bear the image of God. It is by God’s word and spirit that we are reborn as God’s children (John 1:12; 3:8), made holy and good as God created us to be (1 Timothy 4:4–5), and granted assurance of all of God’s promises (2 Corinthians 1:20–22). It is God’s voice that tenderly yet powerfully whispers to us in our time of need (1 Kings 19:12). It is this voice that beckons and presents John in God’s most holy presence to relay intimacy, acceptance, assurance, and awe to those who believe and receive the gift of grace.

QUESTIONS

1. How does God speak to you?
2. What does it mean for us to receive God’s Word?

PRAYER

God, thank you for speaking to me. Thank you for your Spirit inside of me that affirms and empowers your truth in my life. Help me to listen, become, and obey all you say to me. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY THREE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 4

“And day and night the living creatures do not cease to say, ‘HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.’”

—Revelation 4:8b (NASB)

REFLECTION

John describes the four creatures who surround God on each side as being full of eyes, internally and externally. This characteristic indicates these creatures possess unique capacity for perception and comprehension. Isaiah saw these same creatures singing the same song when he had his throne room experience over 800 years earlier (Isaiah 6:1–7). They act as God’s permanent eyewitnesses (pun intended). God does not hide them from his presence. They see all that God is, all that God has been, and all that God will be. They see all God does, all God has done, and all God will ever do. They do this with a more complete capacity for comprehension than we can imagine. If there is any who can give an accurate testimony about God, other than God himself, it is these four creatures.

John informs us of their testimony saying, “day and night, they do not cease to say ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.’” With an unveiled view, they perpetually and accurately testify that God is good and perfect beyond comparison, his authority is supreme and above all things, and he will forever remain faithful, unchanging, and without end.

God allows John to witness this unfolding scene to give us assurance. Even if our perception of God does not feel clear or consistent, we have a reliable testimony about God’s nature, power, and goodness, which gives us hope.

QUESTIONS

1. Does my confidence in God’s character change based on my inconsistent thoughts, circumstances, and emotions?
2. What will my life look like when my eyes are fixed on God’s unchanging nature, power, and goodness?

PRAYER

God, thank you for inviting me into your presence and showing me who you are. Increase my capacity to know and appreciate you. Open the eyes of my heart and soul to believe you are who you have revealed yourself to be. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FOUR

DAILY READING: REVELATION 4

“When the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne, the twenty-four elders will fall down, worship, and cast their crowns before the throne.”—Revelation 4:9–10 (NASB)

REFLECTION

As the Church, we agree that worship is an important role for the Body of Christ, but as churches, we do not always agree on what worship means or should look like. Often, we equate worship with the music sung on a Sunday morning, giving this term the baggage of musical genre and stylistic preferences. While music tends to be a commonly chosen outlet for worship in our culture, worship is much more.

The Greek word for worship in this verse is *proskuneo*, which is a verb that describes falling down in reverence before someone who is worthy of humble respect. Imagine someone who, in the presence of royalty, bows low and kisses the hand of the king or queen. *Proskuneo* is a physical expression of honor and affection. We see it in a woman forgiven of many sins (Luke 7:38). We see it in a man healed after being born blind (John 9:38). We see it here in the twenty-four elders when they hear the testimony of the four living creatures. Awe and adoration that moves us to surrender and submit ourselves to God is always an appropriate response to the person and work of Jesus.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you remember a time where you were moved, emotionally or physically, by a deeper revelation of God? What was it like? What did it lead to?
2. If not, how might you open yourself up to such an experience?

PRAYER

God, thank you for giving me a permanent heart of worship, a heart that is moved by the revelation of who you are, a heart that is not calloused to the power of the gospel, but tender and amazed by you. Help my heart to grow in knowledge, love, and praise of you each and every day. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FIVE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 4

“Worthy are you, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for you created all things, and because of your will they existed, and were created.” –Revelation 4:11 (NASB)

REFLECTION

God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them on purpose. He created humanity on purpose. He created each of us on purpose. Just like an artist with his or her painting, God has the authority to determine the value of his creation. When we were stolen and held captive by the enemy due to our deception, God revealed the price he was willing to pay to reclaim and restore his creation his only Son's life on the cross.

Value is defined by the price someone is willing to pay for something. We were bought with the blood of Jesus. If we have a cheap view of Jesus, we will have a cheap view of the life we have been given. If we understand Jesus' value as the image of the invisible God, through whom all things were made, who is worthy of glory, honor, and power, then we will not take the grace we have received lightly (Colossians 1:15–23). We are meant to display the image and likeness of God, to reveal the mystery of God's wisdom, and to bring praise to God from all of heaven and earth who have witnessed God's image restored in human hearts (Colossians 1:24–29, Romans 8:19–23). That is who we are because of the high price paid for us. Therefore, we look to Jesus—the author, perfecter, and firstborn among many—to show us who we are and how to love the Father for his glory.

QUESTIONS

1. Ask God what Jesus' life is worth to him and then ask God what your life is worth to him.
2. How does your life bring God glory, honor, and power?

PRAYER

God, I love you. I can think of no better purpose for my life than to bring you glory and honor. Thank you that my life brings you glory and honor because of the work of Christ. Worthy are you, my Lord and God, to receive glory, honor, and power. You created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created. Amen.



JESUS IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

(Revelation 4)

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

Ezekiel 1:4–14, Isaiah 6:1–8

INTRODUCTION

In Revelation 4, John is given a vision of the great throne of which there is only One worthy to sit upon it. Around that throne are twenty-four elders, four living creatures, and the angelic host of heaven worshipping the One who is worthy of all praise. This is not the only place in Scripture that a vision of this throne is revealed. All the visions reveal that there is one throne and only One worthy to sit upon it. This image reminds us that the universe is not in chaos; someone is in charge. As we face unsettling days, knowing the future is not as important as worshipping the One who holds the future.

CONVERSATION STARTER

- What is the most memorable storm you have ever experienced? What happened?

READ EZEKIEL 1:4–14

Discussion questions

- Take note of the four creatures and identify the different aspects of created life they represent.
- What does this reveal about who the Lord is and the relationship he has with creation?
- Is there an aspect of creation that leads you to worship the Lord? What is that aspect and why is it meaningful to you?
- Plan to connect with that aspect of creation in worship of the Lord this coming week. Share your plan right now with the group. In your next group meeting, let the group know how your experience went and celebrate the Lord's greatness with each other.

READ ISAIAH 6:1–8

Discussion questions

- What do you think Isaiah experienced that led him to cry “Woe to me!” (v. 5)? Have you ever experienced the Lord like this? What did your experience reveal about who the Lord is and who you are?
- There is room for only one to sit on the throne. Think about the past week, have you or are you trying to place yourself on the throne? What helps you restore the Lord to the throne when you place yourself on it?
- How did the Lord touch Isaiah that allowed him to later offer “Here am I. Send me!” (v. 8)? Consider the Lord's touch in your life. How are you becoming available to the Lord because he reigns?

PRAYER POINTS

- Pray for one another's worship of Jesus to grow this week. Pray for connecting to the greatness of the Lord through creation this week.
- Pray specifically for everyone's availability to the Lord this week. Pray that everyone experiences the joy and fruitfulness of the Lord through faithful obedience.



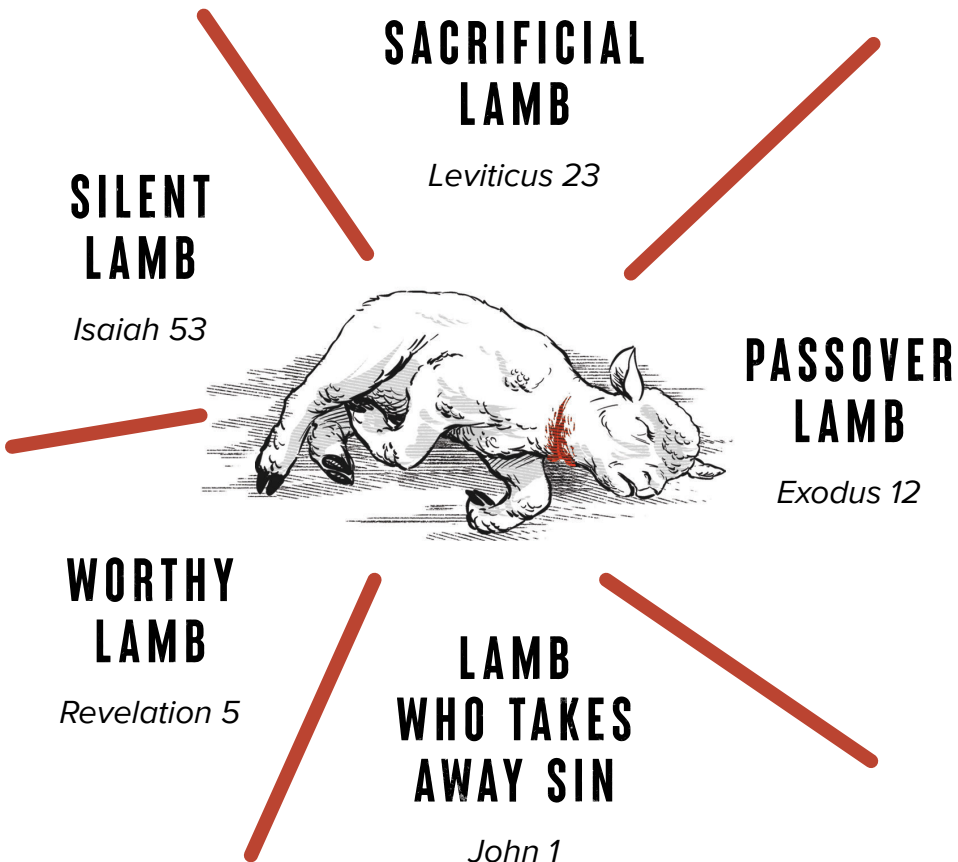
WEEK SEVEN

MESSAGE NOTES | SEPTEMBER 20

What Is Heaven Like? (The Lamb)

VISUAL AID

THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN



PERSONAL DEVOTIONALS

written by debbie raymond

DEVOTIONAL DAY ONE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 5

REFLECTION

Close your eyes and envision the throne room of heaven. Feel the power emanating from the One on the throne. See the multitude of angels praising God. Hear the thunderous roar of all creation worshipping the Lamb. According to John Burke, the author of *Imagine Heaven*, “Imagining and living for heaven is not optional to God—it’s the hope God wants us to hold in our mind’s eye.” Placing ourselves in the midst of this scene will help us to understand the holiness of God the Father, the sacrifice of Jesus, and the role every part of creation plays in worshipping him.

The One on the throne, who has the appearance of dazzling diamonds, is holding a scroll. A mighty angel proclaims in a booming voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” (v. 2). Despair engulfs John at this point because no one is worthy to open the scroll. Amid blazing lightning and powerful rumblings of thunder, John’s eyes quickly turn and focus on the Lamb. This Lamb, the Lion of Judah, emerges victoriously in the center of the throne with seven horns and seven eyes, showing that he is both all-knowing and all-powerful. He grasps the scroll from the right hand of the One on the throne. He is the only one worthy to open the scroll, and in response, the four living creatures and the elders fall down and worship. Thunderous praise and worship erupt for Jesus from the living creatures, the thousands of angels, and from every creature on earth because of his sacrifice for all humanity.

QUESTIONS

1. Can you imagine yourself in this scene? How would you respond to the Lamb?
2. Our lives are to be lived in constant worship of the Lamb. Does imagining all creation worshipping the Lord help you to worship him more?
3. Have you ever fallen before God in adoration and worship?

PRAYER

Lord, teach us to fall in awe before you. Help us to envision this scene and cause us to live for the hope of heaven in constant worship of you. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY TWO

DAILY READING: REVELATION 5

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll...”
—Revelation 5:1 (NIV)

REFLECTION

Chapter 5 opens with John seeing a new vision of God seated on the throne, holding a scroll in his right hand. What is this scroll and what message does it contain?

In John’s time, legal documents or correspondence were written on scrolls, which were papyrus strips laid horizontally on top of vertical strips. The sheets were united and rolled into a scroll. Roman wills were written on scrolls and sealed by seven witnesses, each person tying the will with a string and sealing it with wax. This made it a binding, legally-recognized document. In Revelation 5, God’s authoritative right hand holds the scroll with writing on both sides and with seven seals, which infers this is a binding, legally recognized document. John does not say what the scroll contains, but scholars believe that it was a type of will detailing God’s final plan for the world. This passage echoes Ezekiel 2:9–10, where God showed Ezekiel a scroll that contained words of lamentation and woe. The scroll that John saw foretold woe but also discussed God’s perfect plan of judgment, symbolized by the seven seals. Revelation does the same.

Circumstances often surprise us, but God is never surprised. What if the circumstances aren’t what we want? We continue to trust in God and recall God’s goodness. We trust in his plan and move forward in our faith. Though life doesn’t always go according to our plan, we can trust that God has a plan for our life.

QUESTIONS

1. With all that is happening in the world, are you able to trust God’s plan?
2. When the unexpected occurs, can you move forward in faith?

PRAYER

Holy, Sovereign Lord, help us to trust you with your final plan for the world. Lord, we also need your help in trusting you when things don’t go according to our plan. Help us to realize that your plan is the best plan. Thank you that nothing catches you by surprise and that you are good! We love you, Lord. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY THREE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 5

“And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.” –Revelation 5:8 (NLT)

REFLECTION

In Revelation 5:8, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall before the Lamb. Each elder holds a golden bowl of incense, filled with the prayers of the saints. Imagine it: each of our prayers, swirling as smoke, smelling of a delightful aroma, and rising to God.

In the Old Testament, priests burned incense in the morning and evening at the time of sacrifices. The priests regarded the sacrificial offerings as prayers of worship, praise, thanksgiving, and forgiveness. The morning and evening sacrifices were called continual offerings, which reminded God’s people to pray continually. Like the burning of the incense in the Old Testament, our prayers are to be continual and sacrificial, filled with worship, praise, thanksgiving, and repentance. As incense needs to be set on fire for the aroma to escape, the fire of the Holy Spirit can lead us to pray in this way. These prayers are a delightful aroma to God.

Søren Kierkegaard writes, “Prayer does not change God but changes him who prays.” Prayer pushes us into a deeper relationship with God. As his people deepen their relationship with God, they change. Just as incense covers a terrible odor and replaces it with a pleasing aroma, God takes away the stench of sin as people pray.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you allow the fire of the Holy Spirit to lead you to pray?
2. Do you allow God to change you as you pray?

PRAYER

Holy Spirit, lead us to pray continually. Help our prayers be a pleasing aroma to you, to be filled with worship, praise, thanksgiving, and repentance. As we pray, change us to become more like you. Lord, we need you. Help us to deepen our relationship with you through prayer. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FOUR

DAILY READING: REVELATION 5

“And they sang a new song with these words...” –Revelation 5:9a (NLT)

REFLECTION

Handel’s Messiah is one of the most impressive pieces of music ever written. In the finale, the chorus sings, “Worthy is the Lamb” and ends with a stunning round of “Amens.” This powerful song is based on the song in Revelation 5:9–10.

This new song of veneration has the appearance of an unequaled grand finale with Jesus being enthroned as King. It commences with the elders and the four living creatures worshipping the Lamb for his sacrifice. Following the elders and creatures, millions of angels join the chorus, and their prayers to Jesus are so loud that it creates a roar. Finally, all creatures in heaven and earth cry out that the “One on the Throne” is worthy to receive all honor, glory, and praise. Dramatically at the closing, the four living creatures shout “Amen!” and the elders fall and worship the Lamb.

Songs in the Bible often signal new beginnings. In the Old Testament, we see David dance and play cymbals before the Lord at the beginning of his kingship; we see the angels sing at Jesus’ birth; and in Revelation 5, all in heaven sing a song which marks the beginning of Jesus being exalted for his victory in redeeming his people. We too, today, should be singing the praises of God. The psalmist in Psalm 98 urges us to sing a new song to the Lord. In our day-to-day lives, this might look like singing praises to him for the majesty of his creation, for the birth of a child, for a milestone accomplished in our lives, or for the gift of a new day. The best way to begin praising him is for our redemption!

QUESTIONS

1. Have you praised God for your new beginning with him?
2. What new beginnings in your life cause you to sing a new song?

PRAYER

Lord, show us how to worship you today. Show us how you are beginning something new in us and how we can praise you for it. Lord, we love you and thank you for your sacrifice for us. Help us to worship you in a way that brings you honor. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FIVE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 5

“...and with your blood you purchased for God [all men].” –Revelation 5:9b (NIV)

REFLECTION

I love Jeeps! I have owned a Jeep for as long as I can remember, but there was always one particular model that I wanted. When I came home one day and found THAT Jeep—a new Jeep Wrangler—in the garage, purchased by my husband for me, I was elated! I love how I can drive my Jeep with the top off and feel the wind in my hair and the sun on my skin. If I decided that I loved that Jeep so much that I just wanted to save it from wear and tear by keeping it in the garage, my husband would be disappointed. He purchased this Jeep for me and wants me to use it the way it was intended.

Revelation 5 states that Jesus purchased us with his blood *for God*. We are God’s possession. Just as my husband bought something special for me that he knew I would love, Jesus purchased us with his blood because he knew how much God loved us, and he knew God had a plan for our lives. God wants us to experience all that life has to offer. In the same way that the owner’s manual shows me how I can experience my Jeep to the optimal level, the Bible tells us how to live in a way that we will flourish. It tells us how to take proper care of ourselves, how to treat others, and helps us to know what purpose God has for us in life. The Bible isn’t a book that limits us, but instead is a book that shows us how to get everything out of life that God desires for us. After all, Jesus purchased us for God. Are you living life like you were purchased for God?

QUESTIONS

1. For what purpose were you created?
2. Are you living your life as if you are God’s possession?
3. Do you fully understand the price that Jesus paid for you?

PRAYER

Lord, help us to turn to your Word to know how to live in a way that honors you. Help us to experience all you have for us. Show us through your Word how to flourish and give us the strength to obey your commands. Amen.



WORTHY IS THE LAMB

(Revelation 5)

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

Exodus 12, Leviticus 16, John 1, Matthew 26

INTRODUCTION

The book of Revelation is filled with visual imagery and metaphors that refer to Jesus. In chapter 5, we read about the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” the “root of David,” and most significantly, the “Lamb who was slain.” This week’s discussion guide will look at some Old Testament references to the Passover lamb, atonement rituals, and John’s gospel references to Jesus as a Lamb; all of these shaped John’s language in the book of Revelation and give us a fuller picture of who Jesus is, was, and will be for us.

CONVERSATION STARTER

- What stood out to you most from this week’s sermon?
- Where have you seen or noticed God’s majesty (or something that reminded you of Jesus’ worthiness) in your life this week?

READ EXODUS 12:1-13

Discussion questions

- Before the Israelites escaped Egypt, God instituted the Passover celebration to help them remember annually the deliverance he provided. Which of the following elements would you have found the most memorable? Why?
 - » The unblemished, sacrificed, roasted lamb/goat (vs. 5–7, 9)
 - » The bitter herbs (v. 8)
 - » The unleavened bread (v. 8)
 - » Eating it while “dressed ready for travel” (v. 11)
- Has anyone in your group participated in a Passover/Seder meal? What was most memorable about it?

- What traditions does your family celebrate to help you remember something God has done?

READ LEVITICUS 16:18-22

Discussion questions

- Why do you think the sacrificial system of the Old Testament required so much shedding of blood (see *also Heb. 9:11–22*)?
- How is the “scapegoat” described in Leviticus 16 different from the atonement we have through Jesus (see *also Heb. 9:25–29*)?

READ JOHN 1:23-34; MATTHEW 26:17-19, 26-29

Discussion questions

- What does John say about Jesus in chapter one to call attention to Jesus’ worthiness?
- Jesus and his apostles were Jews, so they would have celebrated the Passover every year. What does Jesus do and say in the Matthew passage that call attention to his own fulfillment of and connection to the Passover celebration?

PRAYER POINTS

Use any or all of the below songs for a time of reflective prayer and worship. Look them up on YouTube or another video or music service, or type in the URL below.

- *Revelation Song* by Kari Jobe at bit.ly/revelationkari
- *Is He Worthy?* by Chris Tomlin at bit.ly/worthytomlin
- *We Fall Down* by Chris Tomlin at bit.ly/falltomlin



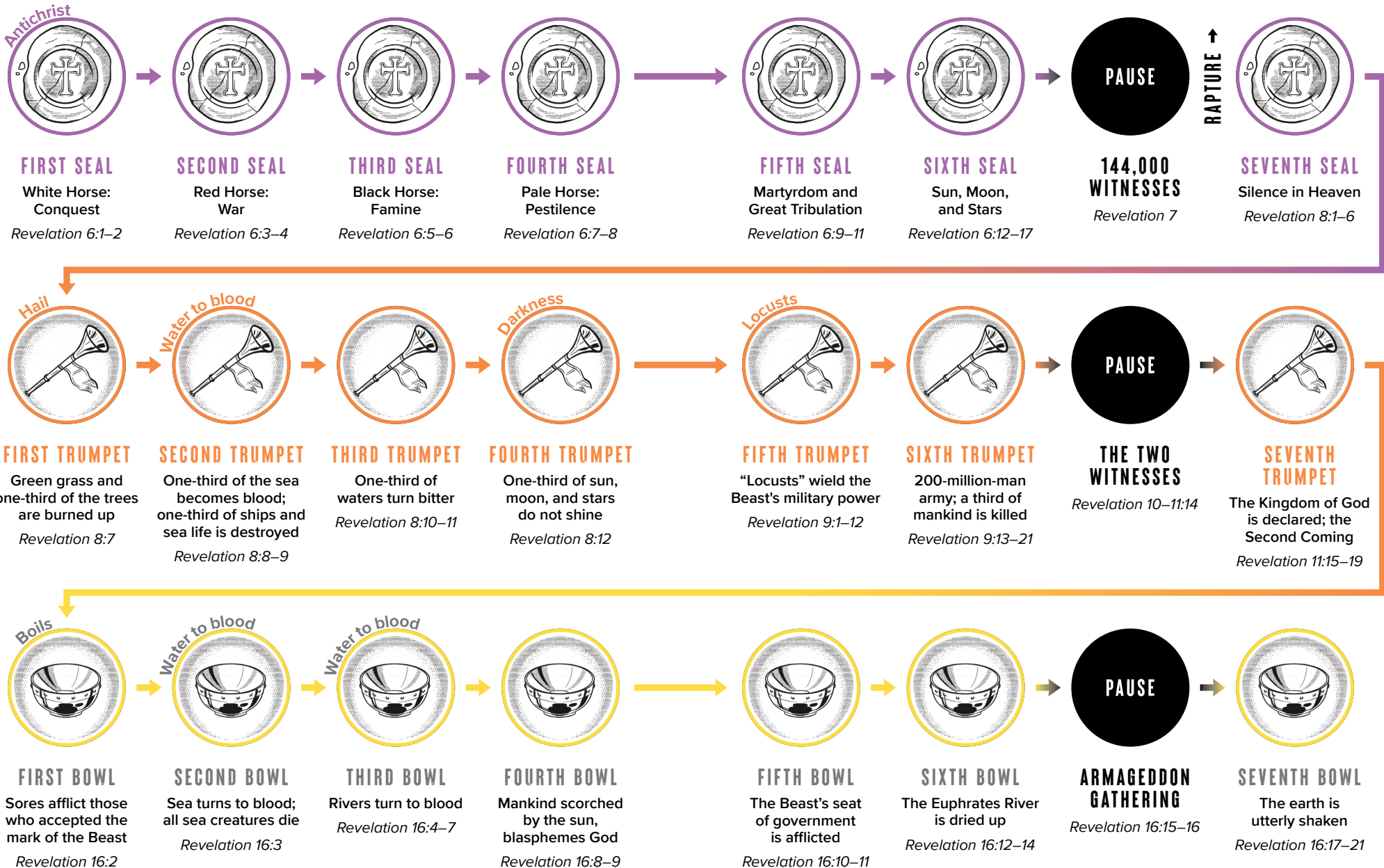
WEEK EIGHT

MESSAGE NOTES | SEPTEMBER 27

What Is the Tribulation? (Seals, Trumpets, Bowls)

VISUAL AID

SEVEN SEALS, SEVEN TRUMPETS, SEVEN BOWLS



An orange decorative banner with a background of abstract patterns, including circles, dots, and horizontal lines. The text is centered in white.

PERSONAL DEVOTIONALS

written by teresa baumach

DEVOTIONAL DAY ONE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 6

“I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given.”—Revelation 6:9 (CSB)

REFLECTION

What am I willing to die for? This is a hard question, uncomfortable but essential. Parents at a child’s deathbed will say, “I would gladly exchange places with my child.” They pray, “Lord, let me die rather than my child.” Jesus died in our place so that we would not perish forever, but instead would have eternal life with him and with the Father.

Since the time of Christ, men and women have been martyred because of the “word of God and the testimony they had given” (v. 9). Sharing the truth about Jesus: who he is, what he did to save us, and how he changed their hearts and lives had to be shared, no matter the cost. Even today, Christians and missionaries around the world are martyred for sharing the Good News of God’s love and Christ’s gift of salvation. Those who are martyred can know that God has not forgotten them or their sacrifice, and all will be righted in the end.

Am I willing to die for my faith? It is easy for me to say I believe, to talk about Jesus, to study the Bible, to pray, and to worship when I am around other believers. When I encounter an unbeliever or when a conversation about faith becomes contentious, am I willing to stand my ground and share my faith then? Am I willing to have someone turn their back on me or even spit in my face because of what I believe? Would I be willing to die rather than to renounce Christ? These are uncomfortable questions, hard questions, and I need to search my heart and get honest with God about how I would answer them.

QUESTIONS

1. Are you willing to share God's Word & your testimony, no matter the cost?
2. What do you have to die to—pride, popularity, acceptance of others, or something else—in order to live for Christ?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to die to pride, popular opinion, and to myself so that I may fully live for you. Give me courage to share your Word and my testimony so that others might believe. May I not be silent but instead glorify you in all I say and do. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY TWO

DAILY READING: REVELATION 7

“They cried out with loud voice, ‘Lord, the one who is holy and true, how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood?’”—Revelation 6:10 (CSB)

REFLECTION

“How long?” This is a question we often ask. It starts in childhood: How long until we get there? How long do we have to stay? How long until I can date? And the “how long” questions continue into our adult lives too. Right now, many of us are asking, “How long until life returns to ‘normal’ again?” For our black and brown brothers and sisters we ask, “How long until racism, inequality, and injustice end for good?” Those with sick loved ones pray, “How long until there is a cure?” And when we or someone we love is hurt or deeply wronged by another, we cry out, “How long until justice is served?”

“How long?” This is the cry of the martyrs who had been *slaughtered* for their faith (Revelation 6:10). They knew that the Lord, who is holy and true, would be the ultimate judge of their killers. They knew God promised, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay” (Deuteronomy 32:35, NIV). But they still asked, “How long?” God, in his great love and mercy, promises just a little bit longer and gives them the white robe of blessedness and victory, washed in the blood of the Lamb, while they rest and wait (v. 11).

We as Christians know that God is righteous and will judge all. Sometimes, when we ask, “How long?” we get immediate answers, but other times, the Lord whispers, “Wait. Just a little longer. Rest and trust me.”

QUESTIONS

1. What “How long?” questions are you asking right now?
2. How can you press into God’s Word and promise that he will make all things right in his time?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father and Lord of all, sometimes we feel such pain and heartache that we cry out, “How long...?” May we trust your Sovereign will, knowing you will make all things right and just, in your time. May we, like the martyrs, rest in you and wait patiently, we pray. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY THREE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 8

“Don’t harm the earth or the sea or the trees until we seal the servants of our God on their foreheads.”—Revelation 7:3 (CSB)

REFLECTION

I believe that I am a child of God and an heir. Where are the signs of that within my life? Can someone see the evidence of God in how I live my life? These are questions to reflect upon because should the end times come in my lifetime, I want to receive the seal of God on my forehead as one who serves and belongs to the Living God.

The Greek word for seal is *sphragis*, and the person who owns the stamp enjoys authority over what is sealed. A seal was a sign of ownership, but also carried with it authentication of or protection over that which was sealed. God does not want to bring his full judgment and wrath upon the world—as described in Revelation 7–9 and 16—until the servants of God have his seal on their foreheads. This seal indicates that they belong to God, that he authenticates their belief, and that he will protect them through the final terrors. God’s children are safe because they carry the seal that they are his. In the end, who will be able to stand against the wrath of God (Revelation 6:17)? The answer is those who have the seal of the Living God.

I desire the seal of the Living God upon me, authenticating that I am a believer, that I belong to God, and that he will protect me always. And I desire to live a life that testifies that I follow Jesus and obey God’s Word. In answer to the question, “Who is able to stand?” I say, “Me.”

QUESTIONS

1. What evidence might others see in your life to indicate that you are a servant of God?
2. If the end times came today, would God see you as his servant and put his seal on your forehead? If not, then how do you need to change?

PRAYER

Father God, I am your child and your servant. I want your seal upon me so that others may know that I am yours today and forevermore. May I live as someone who belongs to the Father today and always. Give me the strength to stand strongly for you each and every day. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FOUR

DAILY READING: REVELATION 9

“After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...”—Revelation 7:9 (CSB)

REFLECTION

Recently, I saw a video of people singing “Amazing Grace” in various languages on Facebook. It was beautiful, and I believe it is a taste of what heaven will look like with people of every nation, tribe, and language standing before the throne praising and worshiping the King. In a world where everything seems so divisive and contradictory, this picture of unity fills me with hope and with joy.

Jesus’ message and gift of salvation extends to people of every tribe, language, race, and nation (Revelation 7:9). Within his passage, we see a progression from “tribe,” the smallest group, to “nation,” the largest group. It shows both diversity in the kingdom of God and the world-wide, all-inclusive nature of the message of Christ. Jesus excludes no one. He is the great equalizer for the purposes of God. *Every* person who chooses to believe in him is part of his kingdom, and this is good news!

It does not matter what family we come from, what language we speak, what group we belong to, or what nation we call home. With his blood, Christ purchased *all* for God. Our part is to go out and reach people from every group for Christ. Imagine the worship in heaven including shouts of thanksgiving and praise from every tribe, language, people, and nations because we shared the good news that Jesus purchased them for God for all eternity.

QUESTIONS

1. What will it look like to be worshiping with people from all tribes, languages, people, and nations?
2. What part are you playing in reaching others for God? What barriers do you need to tear down within your own mind and heart to reach people of every tribe, nation, and language for Jesus?

PRAYER

Lord, we thank you and praise you for redeeming us. We pray that you give us the words to share with others so that they too will be in heaven worshiping with us. We cannot wait for the day when we get to sing your praises with every tribe, language, people, and nation. May we lift our voices in unity today. Amen.

DEVOTIONAL DAY FIVE

DAILY READING: REVELATION 10-11

“These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation... They will no longer hunger; they will no longer thirst... and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”—Revelation 7:14, 16–17 (CSB)

REFLECTION

Life is hard. We wish it was easy, but it isn't. It can be tempting to believe the prosperity gospel that says as long as I am living a Christian life—reading my Bible, going to church, praying, and helping others—my life should be easy and blessed because God wants me to be happy. What happens when it isn't? Do we still trust and believe in the goodness of God? Do we cry out, “God, where are you?” Do we doubt God's love for us or even his existence? God is God in the good times, in the bad times, and in every time in between.

God's Word is a source of strength and hope when life is hard. It promises that God will use all things for our good, that God has a hope and a future for us, and that he loves us. We may think that Revelation only depicts pain, judgment, and the wrath of God poured out on all; however, it contains hope and healing for the faithful. God does not waste pain and he is making everything right.

The promises in Revelation are for us today. We will walk through hard, terrifying, unfair, trying times of pain and tribulation, but God promises to wipe away every tear. There will no longer be hunger, thirst, or suffering. Instead, God will provide rest. He will shepherd us and lead us to springs of life, and we will serve him joyfully. We can rest in these promises.

QUESTIONS

1. When you experience trials, do you become angry at God, doubt him, or trust in his plan? What helps you as you walk through these times?
2. What scripture passage brings you the greatest comfort and hope in hard times? How might you share your hope with others who are hurting?

PRAYER

Father, sometimes our lives are hard and the pain is unbearable. We wonder if trials will end, why bad things happen, and where you are. Remind us of your promises. You are good and faithful. You are bigger than the trials we face. Thank you for your promise to wipe away every tear. May we rest in you today and always. Amen.



HOPE VERSUS FEAR

(Revelation 6)

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:
1 Corinthians 6; Ezekiel 38–39, 40–48

INTRODUCTION

The word “judgment” is one of the words that most often is associated with the book of Revelation. Most of the time words like “judgment” and “wrath” seem pretty scary as we read them. In Revelation 6, we get a glimpse of the beauty that is found in judgment and wrath. Part of living in a broken world that has been wrecked by sin and evil draws us to long for judgment of unjust people, politics, and systems among us. We will discover that the just wrath of God against people who oppose his rule is a means to experience grace.

CONVERSATION STARTER

- What stood out to you most from this week’s sermon?
- What is an injustice that you have seen in our world and culture that make you long for justice?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- In Ezekiel 40 and 41, we read about a word picture of the diagram of the Temple of Ezekiel’s vision. It was perfectly symmetrical and designed to exalt the Holiness of God. For whose benefit is Ezekiel shown the vision of the temple?
- As you consider the physical space in the temple description, what stands out to you?
- There are four typical interpretations from Christian scholars about Ezekiel’s vision:¹
 - » It was a prophetic blueprint of what Ezekiel intended to have rebuilt when the exiles would finally return to Jerusalem.
 - » It is a symbolic vision of the spiritual reality of the Church.
 - » It points to a literal, future temple that will be built in the end times when Israel is consummated in the Kingdom age with Jesus.

» It is an accepted piece of literature that uses highly symbolic language to express the realities that will be experienced when the story of God’s people is brought to a worthy end with the coming of the Messiah.

- Which interpretation seems to do justice to the timeless nature of Scripture, having a message for both the original Israelite readers in exile and Christians today who are longing for Heaven?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 6

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What differences do you see in a biblical view of the body presented in 1 Corinthians 6 and a present cultural view?
- How does having a proper understanding of your body as a “[temple] of the Holy Spirit” (v. 19) lead to a right balance of care and control for your physical body?
- How does the reality of your body being the “[temple] of the Holy Spirit” compare and contrast to an Old Testament understanding of the Holy Temple and future understandings of the Holy Temple?
- What invitations of judgment and settling disputes between believers do you see in 1 Corinthians 6?
- 1 Corinthians 6 encourages both personal purity and corporate purity in the Church. Why are these both necessary?

PRAYER POINTS

- Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal clear steps to take individually and corporately to maintain Holiness and unity.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer together as a group (see *Matthew 6:9–13*).
- Pray for non-Christians you may know, that they would come to know, love, and submit to the Lordship of Jesus.

¹ *The NIV Quiet Time Bible: New International Version*. (1996). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, p. 1023.



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