

2020



BIBLE DISCOVERY GUIDE

DECEMBER

COLOSSIANS — REVELATION

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DECEMBER 2020

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The Church

The Church has woven a long tapestry of historical and institutional homage, embroidered into the fabric of human culture all around the world. But is that all it is, an organization or traditions passed down from one generation to the next? Is it a social construct, or is it something more?

When Jesus Christ first spoke of the Church, meaning “assembly” or “called-out”, He didn’t trivialize its role or purpose — He gave it authority — an authority with divine purpose and eternal value. But authority to Christ did not mean what we typically think authority means. He does not bestow economic privilege, political power, or social prestige on His believers — far from it! Instead, through the power of the Holy Spirit, ordinary people like you and me are given the spiritual power to conquer principalities of darkness, to overcome evil in our lives, to be free from the bondage of sin.

Twenty-two of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament are letters dedicated to encouraging, edifying, and educating the Church. To the church of Galatia, Paul highlights the error of taking Jewish law above the law of Christ. To the church of Ephesus, he encourages unity and love in the midst of persecution.

The church of Philippi is

rewarded for their faithfulness, while the church at Colossae is challenged about what it meant to truly know and love the LORD. To the church at Thessaloniki, he emboldens them with prophetic words of Christ’s return as a comforter in perseverance. To the church of Corinth, who struggled with an over-indulgence of cultural immorality, Paul persistently corrects and instructs them to focus on Christ and fight against sin. While Peter writes two epistles to the global Church, John writes three letters to, “the elect lady and her children”.

I hope this helps demonstrate the attention of care and love we should all have for one another as the Church, no matter how small or far away. The LORD created the Church, and we are His bride. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate!

As this year comes to a close, I ask you to think deeply about your relationship with Jesus Christ, and your relationship with fellow believers. It’s time to wake up and be the Church.

Rod Hembree, Th.D, DE.



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How to use this Guide

Make the most of your devotional time with our Guide to the Bible in a year. Each Guide provides valuable context and theological insight to help strengthen your faith and dig deeper into the richness of God's Word every day.

In 2020, our focus is on the theme of Vision. The following three tips will help you make the most of your daily Bible reading and Guide:



SPOTLIGHT ON...

In every Guide, you'll find a section with specific highlights from the perspectives of science, apologetics, history, and more. These viewpoints provide a holistic context from which to view the month's Bible reading, giving us a greater understanding of the Word, and equipping us to grasp the impact of the Bible in these important fields.



DAILY READING

The readings are in traditional order, with a date corresponding to the Hebrew calendar. Each reading consists of a daily insight and a focus on three major takeaways from the day's Bible passage. Challenge yourself to meditate on the *Discovering The Truth* and *Today's Prayer* sections as you go about your day.



WATCH THE DAILY SHOW

Catch our companion TV series for even more valuable insight and theological discussion, hosted daily by the Hembree family. Join Rod, Janice, Ryan and Corie in this thirty-minute devotional show that will change the way you see and read the Bible. Visit **BibleDiscoveryTv.com** to watch our show online or to find a tv channel in your area.

Revelation's Subtler Sevens

by Ryan Hembree



That Revelation is a book of “sevens” is exceedingly obvious, even for the casual reader. Some of the more perspicuous occurrences include the seven lampstands, seven spirits, seven stars, seven churches, seven lamps, the seven-sealed scroll, seven trumpets, seven bowls of wrath, seven promises to the overcomer, seven horns, seven eyes, seven angels, seven thunders, seven thousand, seven heads, seven crowns, seven plagues, seven mountains, seven kings, and so on.

There are, however, numerous other occurrences of seven that aren't so apparent. For example, while it is obvious that there are seven letters to seven churches, what may not be immediately perceivable is that each letter itself is composed of seven elements: (1) the name of the church, (2) chosen title of Christ, (3) a commendation, (4) Christ's concerns, (5) an exhortation, (6) a promise to the overcomer, and (7) the close. Revelation also has seven personages including the woman, male child, red dragon, seven-headed beast, false prophet, Michael and the Lamb (12; 13). There are seven years of judgments (11:3; 12:6, 14; 13:5), seven “I am” statements of Christ (1:8, 11, 17, 18; 21:6; 22:13, 16), seven doxologies in heaven (4:9-11; 5:8-

13; 7:9-12; 11:16-18; 14:2,3; 15:2-4; 19:1-6), seven new things (20, 21), and even seven beatitudes:

- Blessed is he who reads and those who hear and keep those things... (1:3)
- Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord (14:13),
- Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments (16:15),
- Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:9),
- Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection (20:6),
- Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book (22:7), and
- Blessed are those who do His commandments (22:14).

Although there are disagreements surrounding how Revelation ought to be interpreted, there's no debating its hepatic (seven-fold) structure. And we've only just scratched the surface. Indeed, as the late Dr. Chuck Missler quipped, “I suspect that it's probably not possible to make an exhaustive list of the ‘sevens’. Whatever number you come up with there's probably seven times that many.” ■

Who was the Author of Hebrews?

by Corie Bobeckko



The book of Hebrews was and still is a hot topic, especially when it comes to authorship. Neither the contents of the book nor any of the most ancient manuscripts contain a claim of authorship. There are a few editions of the King James Bible that have an additional postscript at the end of the book, which claim Paul as author. However, the King James translators were using medieval manuscript copies that were altered by medieval scribes, who added Paul's name at a later date. As such, this postscript, while interesting and preserving an ancient tradition, cannot be properly viewed as the original words of the author of Hebrews.

Intriguingly, even early Church history is divided over the authorship of Hebrews. Candidates included: Paul, Luke, Barnabas, and Clement of Rome. Paul as author would explain the inclusion of Hebrews into the New Testament Canon; all books considered Scripture needed to have a direct connection with an apostle. Paul, of course, fits the bill since he was already a prolific writer of the New Testament. But there are problems with Paul as author:

- He signed every one of his known letters, as was his custom (2 THESSALONIANS 3:17)
- Hebrews 2:3 seems to indicate that the

author had secondhand knowledge of Christ, and not the vision of him that Paul claimed

- Hebrews also is written in different style than all of the other letters of Paul
- And none of the other letters attributed to Paul were ever debated in earliest Christianity, but Hebrews was contested.

Luke as author would also provide the necessary apostolic link, as Luke had trained and travelled with Paul and had also written the Gospel of Luke and Acts. Luke as author is also claimed to solve the mystery of having a different style and literary form from Paul's other letters, while still crossing over in main theological points. Barnabas was put forward in ancient times due to his connection with Paul and being a Levite (ACTS 4:36) would account for Hebrews interest in the priesthood. Clement of Rome, a student of Peter was put forward based on similarities between the text of Hebrews, and his letter to the Corinthians entitled 1 Clement.

Other suggestions have been put forward by famous Christians and modern scholars alike, but, perhaps, it is most safe to hold an opinion like early church father Origen who around AD 200 names Paul (or one of his students) as author, yet still conceding, "But who wrote the epistle, in truth, God knows." ■



BIBLE DISCOVERY GUIDE

DECEMBER

COLOSSIANS — REVELATION



Discovery of God's Word

COLOSSIANS 1-2

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Colossae was a city with a vibrant Christian church. Though Paul never visited, he wrote them a letter of encouragement to help them develop their theology. Theology is a word that means the study of God, in other words, to think about and grow in the understanding of God. Today, there are whole systems of theology to approach the study of God and the Bible: Systematic Theology, Biblical Theology, General Theology, Old Testament and New Testament Theology. Studying the Bible and understanding its messages is one of the most important achievements of the Christian life. Of course, a full understanding of God's messages is impossible without first coming to know Him as LORD and Saviour. The next step after this salvation is trusting God while pushing forward in the work of reading and knowing God's Word, the Bible. We may not have the money or time for Bible school, but we must make room in our lives to listen to our Saviour through the words preserved for us in the Bible. God's Word is for everyone, and we should read it regularly.

DISCOVERING GOD – COLOSSIANS 1:1-10

– 1 –

Paul greets the church in Colossae using the name of Jesus Christ.

Everything we do and say is used by God.

(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

God's Church grows because of His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the key to knowing God.

(v. 3-8)

– 3 –

We must pray for knowledge of God's will and spiritual understanding. God's work in our lives is divine, never human.

(v. 9-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The secret to God's Kingdom is in the divine and not the naturally human. We can expect the LORD to do supernatural things when we serve God. We should listen to the LORD, daily.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO LISTEN TO YOU EVERY MINUTE OF EVERY DAY.

Just and Fair

COLOSSIANS 3-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Christian life carries with it the obligation to live with a higher moral standard than the rest of the world. We must live better, treat better, and respond better. We are people who claim to have found God through Jesus Christ, and we are telling others about Him. Do our lives back up these claims? What makes us different from the rest of the world? Salvation changes so much about who we are, and it directly changes our attitudes toward others. We are to become better people with a mindset focused on eternity, rather than what we can get in the here and now. Galatians 5:22-24 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." If we have Christ, how should we act, as people? This is what Paul begins to speak about in Colossians 4.

DISCOVERING GOD – COLOSSIANS 4:1-9

– 1 –

We should treat all people like people.

Jesus Christ is LORD and has created everyone through His hands.

(v. 1)

– 2 –

Prayer is the way God grows His Kingdom.

Remember the power and importance of prayer.

(v. 2-4)

– 3 –

How we act and react matters. The LORD helps us to grow in grace and change our attitudes.

(v. 5-9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Word of God teaches us that what we say and how we act matters. We cannot simply act like we want and expect God's Holy Spirit to do the work for us. As followers of Jesus, we must learn how to be with each other and for each other in our words and our actions. Let us pray for the Holy Spirit to help us.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO BECOME THE PERSON YOU DESIRE ME TO BE.

The Good News

1 THESSALONIANS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

According to recent statistics (WWW.OPENDOORSCA.ORG), each year there are an estimated 260 million people worldwide who suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ. This is the only time in history in which so many people are being persecuted for loving and following the LORD Jesus. The truth of Christianity has reached much of the world's population, resulting in significant numbers of believers in territory hostile to the gospel. This concept and the reality of persecution was not foreign to the apostles and the early Church. Think of the Apostle Paul who had experienced this from both sides. While he was still called Saul, he persecuted the followers of Christ, until he was stopped by Jesus Himself on the road to Damascus. The Bible says in Acts 9:1, "Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the LORD..." Saul, now known as Paul, was himself saved by the Man and Saviour he despised. As a disciple now acquainted with the other side of persecution, Paul writes this letter to the Thessalonian church.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 THESS. 2:1-12

– 1 –

There is no need to explain why the gospel grows so much, because it is God's work. The Holy Spirit anoints, or sets apart, His Word.
(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

The gospel, or the good news, is always delivered by God's faithful people. The gospel message of God needs no enhancement of men.
(v. 5-9)

– 3 –

We should walk worthy of God. All glory must be to the LORD God, and never to men or women.
(v. 10-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Word of God is clear about how we should talk, teach, and preach. The LORD's Word must be taught well and with minimum human interference. As we read from the Bible, we must allow it to teach us how to think and act.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO HEAR YOUR WORD TODAY.

The Seasons of God

1 THESSALONIANS 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Armageddon, the end times, Christ's second coming, and the Antichrist: these topics of the last days are fraught with arguments today. Modern Christians battle over the Day of the LORD and its interpretation. Does the Bible say we should rage and fight over how things will unfold around the LORD's return? Did the Apostle Paul write because he hoped the Church would fall into conflict? He did not! He told us, and expected the church at Thessalonica, to comfort one another with the words and ideas of God's coming. Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5, tell us about how God is coming and that He has a plan. We learn that eternity with Christ is close!

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 THESS. 5:1-11

– 1 –

According to Paul, the Day of the LORD will be a surprise to most people. It will come as a thief in the night.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

We are to be awake and alert. We must pray and work to win people to the LORD, because the coming of God is near.

(v. 4-8)

– 3 –

As followers of Jesus Christ, we are not destined for God's wrath.

No matter the Biblical translation you look at, God's Word says the same thing. (v. 9-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

There are many things we can fight about, but we are not to fight with each other when so many people need the LORD! Let's not waste our time over arguments that can't be won! We should always keep our focus, our efforts and work about introducing others to Jesus Christ as LORD and Saviour.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME FOCUS MY EFFORTS TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.

Unrighteousness

2 THESSALONIANS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The days in which we live are evil, and they are limited in time. These ideas are not something that will play well in humanist arenas like the United Nations, but the Bible is clear. The Bible tells of a “falling away” from God that will happen in the end. Ask yourself what you believe: Is the Bible truthful? Is it all fiction? Can we trust it? Paul speaks to the church at Thessalonica several times about the end of time. These words from God actually tell us that in the end many will take pleasure in doing unrighteousness; pleasure will rule the day. When I think about the last thirty years of our culture’s history, I can’t help but think about the influence of mass media and marketing. Life has become all about us – our wants, our dreams, our desires – we are loving ourselves rather than God; a dangerous path, indeed.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 THESS. 2:1-12

– 1 –

We may not be here when the son of sin appears.

The Antichrist is a man who imitates Christ for his own gain to show himself as God.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

There is a restrainer – the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is in us. When we are removed, so is the Holy Spirit.

(v. 5-7)

– 3 –

The Antichrist will perform many signs and wonders. These signs and wonders will be the workings of satan, not of God.

(v. 8-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The end of days may be discussed as a concept or a belief, but it is a reality. Things are happening right now that are in the Bible. Every generation that passes is closer to the promised end. The Word of God is not less relevant today, but more relevant than ever. We need to keep reading it.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORD – THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF TRUTH IN THIS EVER-SHIFTING WORLD. HELP ME TO GROW IN AND LISTEN TO YOUR WORD DAILY.

To Timothy

1 TIMOTHY 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

If you ever wanted to learn about conversations between pastors, the letters to Timothy are a great place to begin. In these letters, Paul refers to Timothy as his spiritual son. These books of letters are both personal and practical as Paul gives direction to this young evangelist, working to build the Church.

But 1 & 2 Timothy are not just for pastors or church leadership. It's a message that is really for all of us. How we hear God, and what the LORD says in the Scripture, is not only important for us, it is life changing. The Holy Spirit has placed His Words in the Bible so that we can learn. When reading 2 Timothy, we also get the benefit of Paul's aged perspective; what he thought was critical to life, because this letter was written at the end of his ministry.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

– 1 –

Paul addresses Timothy as a true son in the faith.

The family of God is the greatest family ever.

(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

The purpose of the commandment of God is true or Godly love. We must teach from this, rather than human thinking.

(v. 3-7)

– 3 –

The law of God is for those who do not know God. If we know the LORD through Jesus, we want to serve Him.

(v. 8-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

What Paul writes to Timothy is great teaching applicable to all of us. As Christians, we should consider ourselves Bible students regardless of whether we're enrolled in a physical Bible School. The Holy Spirit will be our teacher as we focus our minds and pursue the knowledge of God through His Word.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO LEARN FROM YOU. I ENROLL MYSELF AS A STUDENT OF THE BIBLE!

Honour Widows

1 TIMOTHY 4-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Bible says that there are two genders: male and female. It also reports that the difference between them is physical, not intellectual. The Church of the LORD Jesus Christ is given instructions through the Holy Spirit in the treatment of Church members and specifically in 1 Timothy 5, about how to care for widows in time of need. Christian widows could dedicate themselves fully to the service of God, but within society older widows in the lower classes were often left without legal protection, financial means, and were deemed too old to work. What was the Church to do? As the family of God, such a widow would be provided for from the Church and would take up responsibilities within the Church community. But for the widows who had surviving family, children and close relatives, it was their family's moral responsibility to rise up and provide for her. Taking responsibility was and is an important Christian value. The Church should not allow the abuse of social security systems, but should also be kind, generous and full of love.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-10

– 1 –

Paul explains the treatment of Church members. The way we treat each other is critical to our faith.
(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

A family should take care of their own instead of passing their responsibility onto the Church. Let's take responsibility for our family and extended family.
(v. 3-8)

– 3 –

Widows are to be tended to as they have also tended to the things of God. Ministers have a responsibility to take care of God's family.
(v. 9-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

It is very important for us to pay attention to the Scriptures. Many times, we choose to do things we feel are good, but we can also use feelings to justify not doing good things. Responsibility is more important than our feelings. As Christians, we should be responsible for those who truly have need.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, PLEASE HELP ME TO
KNOW AND APPLY YOUR WORD.
HELP ME IN MY DEALINGS WITH
OTHER CHRISTIANS.**

It's Personal

2 TIMOTHY 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

If ever there was a personal letter written and recorded in the Bible, 2 Timothy is it. Through it, the LORD has made Paul's last words to Timothy available to the whole Church across time. Paul writes to Timothy as a true son of the faith, and speaks in a way that is encouraging and positive. Even though the idea of these being Paul's last words is somewhat tragic, as believers in Jesus Christ we are warmed with the idea of eternity. Paul is not dead, he is with the LORD! 2 Timothy is a great book of personal fellowship from Paul the apostle that the Holy Spirit has used to edify the Church.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-11

– 1 –

Paul tells Timothy that he knows his faith is real.

Real faith in Christ makes a noticeable difference in our lives.

(v. 1-5)

– 2 –

Paul encourages Timothy to be strong and remain in Christ.

God does not discourage us, but encourages us with love, power, and a sound mind.

(v. 6-7)

– 3 –

Paul reminds each of us that we are called to demonstrate the good news of Jesus Christ in our life.

Preach the good news and, if necessary, use words! (v. 8-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We are designed to know God and to understand our calling. As Christians, we are to demonstrate the good news of Jesus Christ. This is not the time to sit idly by, no matter what stage of life we are in! God has called us to teach about Jesus Christ in our unique way.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO LIVE MY LIFE IN A WAY THAT SHOWS MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO YOU ARE.

A Sound Church

TITUS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

What do people mean when they ask, “Is that church sound?” In my experience, people have a variety of ideas about what makes a sound church. The book of Titus is clear that we must teach according to what we learn from the Bible, being faithful to apply its sound doctrine is the only right way.

The Apostle Paul admonishes Titus to apply the Scriptures to the lives of the people, because it is the people who make up the Church; older and younger women, older and younger men are all a part of what God is doing in the world. Church isn’t what the state defines, it isn’t what mankind decides or physically builds. The Church is the people of God through whom the Holy Spirit is supposed to work. When God commands us to keep the Church sound, He is speaking about us.

DISCOVERING GOD – TITUS 2:1-10

– 1 –

The Church must teach what the Bible teaches.

Sound doctrine does not come from the mind of men but from the Word of God.

(v. 1)

– 2 –

The Church of the LORD Jesus is not to be like the rest of the world.

As we follow Christ, our actions are held to a higher calling.

(v. 2-5)

– 3 –

The Church must be faithful to God in all things.

Our lives must be fully committed to our LORD.

(v. 6-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Following Christ means keeping our lives accountable to God’s Word. We must know what Jesus taught and what the Bible says. Let’s not fool ourselves into complacency but, instead, allow the Holy Spirit to be our constant Teacher and Guide.

TODAY’S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SAVING GRACE IN MY LIFE. HELP ME TO KNOW YOU AND YOUR WORD MORE EACH DAY.

Ripped Off

PHILEMON

DISCOVERING THE WORD

At the same time that Paul wrote Colossians, he wrote what we call the book of Philemon. These are both a part of the letters that Paul wrote while imprisoned for preaching the gospel. This letter is addressed to a man named Philemon, who was a fellow Christian and friend. Paul writes about how he met a man in prison who had taken advantage of Philemon, and that this man had converted to Christianity because of his interaction with Paul. Paul now writes to Philemon to encourage him to do the right thing. Though socially forgiveness would not have been expected or accepted, Christ changes all.

Just like Philemon, when we are taken advantage of, we too must remember that we have been forgiven an unforgivable debt by our Saviour. As Christians we don't repay evil for evil, instead we forgive.

DISCOVERING GOD – PHILEMON

– 1 –

As we follow the LORD, we will change. Our love and faith in the LORD Jesus impacts our lives and others around us.
(v. 1-7)

– 2 –

When we give our hearts to the LORD, we are part of the family of God. We are brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.
(v. 8-16)

– 3 –

The Church is made up of men and women of God. We must always respond to each other in God's mercy.
(v. 17-25)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Only with the help of the Holy Spirit is it possible for us to totally forgive those who have deeply offended us. We must be open to the LORD's working, and be willing and pliable to change our attitudes and lives.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO BECOME MORE LIKE YOU, AND LESS LIKE MY OLD, SINFUL SELF.

The Authority of God

HEBREWS 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The authority of man is one thing, but the vast authority of God is something else entirely. If we have taken Jesus Christ as our Saviour, then we have put our own authority under His, this makes Him our LORD. There will come a time when even those who are unsaved and don't recognize God's authority will, nevertheless, see Him and have to come under His authority. The authority that God has given to Jesus Christ will be given to His sons in the future. The sons of God are both men and women – all who have given their lives to follow Jesus Christ and serve Him.

As humans we recognize the authority in government, in economics, in social organizations, but very few recognize the authority of God now. Soon the LORD will come and all authority which has been given to Him. We who are His children will have the privilege of serving Him with His authority fulfilled in us.

DISCOVERING GOD – HEBREWS 2:1-9

– 1 –

Salvation is the beginning of God's authority in our life. We can do nothing about sin on our own.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

If we have accepted Jesus Christ as LORD, we are adopted by Him. We do not yet see the great authority God has given us.

(v. 5-8)

– 3 –

God has experienced everything that we could go through, even death.

The LORD conquered everything by His work, even death by His resurrection.

(v. 9)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Remember that Jesus Christ has felt and experienced everything negative that we have. There is nothing that has happened to us which Jesus Christ our LORD cannot heal us from. That is why forgiveness is such an important part of our testimony.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO FOLLOW YOUR LEAD IN FORGIVING OTHERS, AS YOU HAVE FORGIVEN ME.

Growing In God

HEBREWS 5-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

God desires us to grow as much as we can in His Word and through the Holy Spirit. Becoming spiritually mature is not like reaching human maturity, it is not a naturally occurring biological process; it is divine and takes effort. Spiritual maturity begins with salvation and continues as we apply our faith and the Word to every part of our lives.

The persecuted Church may seem disadvantaged to us in the west, but they are an example of becoming spiritually mature. Most of the numeric growth of the Church around the world seems to be happening in the places where it is hard to live as a believer in Jesus Christ. God uses resistance to our faith to grow it in us and in those around us. Hebrews 6 explains that when we focus more on the work of God, we become more spiritually mature. Growing in God is not something that comes with wealth or health or comfort.

DISCOVERING GOD – HEBREWS 6:1-12

– 1 –

God is not shameful. He is glorious. “God does not sponsor any flops!”

(v. 1-6)

– 2 –

Even the earth shows the result of being unfruitful, whose end is to be

burned. We must show ourselves fruitful to the work of the LORD.

(v. 7-8)

– 3 –

To grow spiritually means that we change our attitudes about God and

sin. We look forward to the great things God has and will accomplish in us through Christ. (v. 9-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Why would we be excited about sin when we can have great things that God desires to build in us now? Remember that Jesus Christ has given us relationship with our Creator; we should not ignore that but build on it. Our eternal life begins now. Let's not waste our earthly lifetime.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO GROW IN MY LOVE AND FAITH IN YOU. HELP ME PROGRESS IN YOUR WORD AND GUIDE ME WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT.

The Final Sacrifice

HEBREWS 9-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

God does not desire physical sacrifice to pay for sin. In fact, many religions make use of the idea of sacrifices to establish their existence and keep people committed. But Jesus Christ was the final sacrifice according to God's will. He did not erase or nullify the work of the Old Covenant He fulfilled it; He performed the whole law and was its culmination. The death and resurrection of Christ launched the Jewish people and the rest of the human world into the time of the New Covenant. God desires us to move forward rather than focusing our attention on religious obligations. As Christians, we need to put all of our energy into following Jesus. We need to know what He did and said, how He reacted and why. Our study of Him and our relationship with Him needs to be the foundation of our actions and reactions. In other words, we need to work to make our lives be representations of Christ to the world. We need to allow the Holy Spirit to move us into a new and holy place of living.

DISCOVERING GOD — HEBREWS 10:1-10

– 1 –

Physical sacrifices do not take away sin.

Our offerings to God are given out of joy and thankfulness to Him.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

God has no desire or pleasure in offerings and sacrifices given for sin.

It is only Christ's death that fulfills God's will for our salvation.

(v. 5-8)

– 3 –

We must seek to do God's will in our life. Serving the LORD means we change our life to follow Him.

(v. 9-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Giving tithes and offerings is not an obligation as much as it is a way to show God how much we love Him and are grateful for His provision. We are not saved from our sins by giving tithes and offerings; we are saved only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO FOLLOW YOU EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE. THANK YOU FOR THE BLOOD OF JESUS THAT CLEANSSES ME FROM MY SIN. HALLELUJAH!

Focus On God

HEBREWS 11–13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

These days, everyone and everything seems to be competing for our attention! Companies and their advertisers are constantly in front of our faces wanting us to buy their products. Everyone seems to be trying to sell us happiness and contentment – we just need to buy into their product or worldview – but all of this is a never ending cycle, an onslaught of marketing. What if the truth doesn't push like this? Will we hear it? It's tempting in this world to only hear the version of the truth that makes you happy, or comfortable, or lets you vent your emotions and desires. We should be asking ourselves: What is our appropriate response to the world as believers in Jesus Christ? A most important step is to become unhampered by the distractions. We need to recapture the long-lost art of meditation in God's Word. Reading the Bible and taking time to think about what you have just read is absolutely critical to living as a true Christ follower. Without this we will be doomed to live in the indulgent and reactive ways of the world.

DISCOVERING GOD – HEBREWS 12:1–11

– 1 –

God wants much more than we often give Him in our lives. Let us live our lives fully committed to following Christ.
(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

Jesus Christ actually shed His blood resisting sin. Our idea of resistance is bleak.
(v. 3-4)

– 3 –

As Christians we are all the sons of God. Men and women, we all must learn to listen to the LORD and praise Him for His care!
(v. 5-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Hearing God is not always happy for us. Sometimes we need to hear about our mistakes and failures. The reason God brings correction to us is so that we can confront and change those things. This is one of the ways we serve the LORD.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR DISCIPLINE. HELP ME LISTEN TO YOUR CORRECTIONS AND CHANGE. THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME CLOSER TO YOU, HEAVENLY FATHER.

James, the Just

JAMES 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The book of James is a wonderful read. It was most likely written by James the half-brother of Jesus, born to Mary and Joseph after Christ's birth.

The gospels tell us that the half-brothers and sisters of Jesus did not believe in Jesus (JOHN 7:3-5) until His resurrection from the dead (ACTS 1:14). James then earned the nickname "James the Just" because of his exceptional dedication to the principles of Jesus. James' book was written sometime before the council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15 (AD 48-49). This epistle, or message, is aimed at Jewish Christians. It is a full and fascinating read. James is a letter of personal encouragement and it urges us, even today, to focus on the true things of God.

DISCOVERING GOD – JAMES 2:1-13

– 1 –

We must not judge someone based on their wealth. God sent His Son for everyone, everywhere.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

Money is not the way we show our faith or demonstrate Jesus Christ.

We give because we love Jesus Christ.

(v. 5-7)

– 3 –

Mercy is a great virtue that we must have and give. God has granted us

divine mercy, so we must extend the same without favouritism.

(v. 8-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Early on in his epistle, James establishes how the Christian should live and move. As we read the Bible, it becomes very clear that we must learn about Christ's character and change our ways of thinking to His.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I ASK YOU FOR YOUR WISDOM IN MY LIFE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR WORD OF TRUTH AND YOUR GREAT FAITHFULNESS!

The Origin of War

JAMES 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Many philosophers, psychologists and sociologists say that the origin of violence, rivalry, and war is triggered by complex elements in the human mind. While the mind is a key player in evil, the Bible digs a little deeper and says that the origin of war is the outpouring of sin, which is spiritual by nature. Without God we do not have what we truly need in our fallen condition, and because of our nature we are left in a bind: need becomes want and want becomes need; a contradiction of the highest degree! In our desperate and depraved place of incompleteness, all sorts of sinful desires manifest as need, as if you cannot go on living without them. But you can — you need to want what you need. We all need an eternal destiny, a reason to live and exist that goes beyond this materialistic life. That is what God provides through Jesus Christ. Make Him your LORD now!

DISCOVERING GOD — JAMES 4:1-6

– 1 –

War, battle and struggle come from the inner conflict of desires and pleasures in our mind.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to take control of our hearts. (v. 1-3)

– 2 –

Our fight is not with each other but inside our heart, mind, and spirit, seeking for God. Remember that

God not only meets our needs, but gives us a plan to move forward. (v. 4-5)

– 3 –

God is graceful to those who are humble.

The answer to our life questions is to get with God's plan for our life.

(v. 5-6)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Personality differences are often associated with animal traits, colours or constellations. Unfortunately, many are becoming addicted to personality tests. But God tells us the truth about the discrepancies inside of us; they are caused by sin in our life. When we come to Jesus Christ and follow Him, God will help us to go forward.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I CHOOSE NOT TO IDENTIFY MY PERSONALITY BUT TO SANCTIFY IT, WITH YOUR HELP.

Husbands & Wives

1 PETER 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The meaning of marriage is very different than it was even 40 years ago. The Bible encourages husbands and wives to treat each other with sacred respect. God's Word clearly defines the marriage covenant, but it's not popular today. If we focus on a competitive or "compromised" relationship rather than a complementary union in marriage, we will end up working against each other. Both men and women are to work together through Christ in harmony with each other. There are things that women do naturally better than men, and things that men do naturally better than women. This is beautiful! When we work together, especially in marriage, we complement each other. In Peter's letter recorded in 1 Peter 3, he focuses on this aspect of sacred relationships.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 PETER 3:1-7

– 1 –

By her conduct, a wife may win her husband to the LORD. Our behaviour with others should bring glory to God.
(v. 1-2)

– 2 –

The inner beauty of a woman is more precious to God than anything she will wear. A husband's heart is won by the inward beauty of his wife.
(v. 3-6)

– 3 –

In no way is a husband to take advantage of his wife, but be good to her. God wants us to be humble so that we can grow in our personal prayer life with Him. (v. 7)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The most important personal relationship we can have is with the LORD. God also says that we express our love for Him through how we love other people, especially our spouse. As Christians, it is important that we express, explore, and commit to the way God designed the marriage covenant.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO CONDUCT MY MARRIAGE AND LIFE IN THE WAY YOU DESIRE.

Acting Right

1 PETER 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The way we conduct ourselves in church helps Christians and non-Christians alike understand what we *truly* believe. A lot of people who go to church think that it's a place to do what you feel – to let your personality out – to enjoy yourself. Now, don't get me wrong! It's okay to let yourself relax, but hopefully, we will learn to adjust our personality traits as to what God commands and desires of His people. We can only do that as we let God work with us. It is the Holy Spirit who comes into our hearts when we are saved from the devastation of sin, and changes us. 1 Peter 5 explains how we should learn to surrender and live to God, so that He can use us. But today, many people see church as a place where they can go to feel free and do whatever their emotional urges dictate. Very, very dangerous!

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 PETER 5:1-11

– 1 –

Church elders must be examples and continue to grow in God the way the LORD desires. Christian leadership is about willingly serving others. (v. 1-4)

– 2 –

We must stay humble and not become proud. This is the way God builds us, His Church. (v. 5-7)

– 3 –

We have an enemy of our soul, but we can resist him with God's help. Be filled with God's Spirit and resist the devil, at all times. (v. 8-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Satan, the enemy of our soul, also went after Jesus Christ. Satan took Scripture out of context and tried to tempt Christ. As we study and learn from the Bible, it is imperative that we keep it in context and study with the right attitude. God will always help us, if we pray and ask Him to.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO LEARN AND KNOW THE BIBLE LIKE YOU DESIRE ME TO.

False Prophets

2 PETER 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

We are warned about false prophets in the Bible. A prophet is a person who hears from God and speaks to the people on His behalf. In the Old Testament, they prophesied about repentance, righteousness, the Messiah, and new creation. The problem in these New Testament times is that God's Word speaks on behalf of the prophets, but many people today claim that they have the same anointing (or "setting apart") as the Old Testament prophets. These so-called prophets are packaging their own ideas as "God's Word" for your life. So, I ask you: Is the Bible about 'old news', or the good news? God is truly good, so you can trust that He will not contradict what He has already said, nor will He contradict what He will do. Do not listen to "prophets" who contradict the Bible, especially those who twist and forecast unbiblical realities! The gift of prophecy, then, is given to a person who speaks on behalf of God and His Word, clarifying the deep Biblical truths in easy, simple, and understandable ways.

DISCOVERING GOD — 2 PETER 2:1-11

– 1 –

There are false prophets among us today who do not speak for God. If we do not know the Bible, we are easily tripped up!

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

The LORD will deliver us from evil prophets. God always shows Himself strong; He will not let His truth fall!

(v. 4-9)

– 3 –

Those who do not respect authority are self-willed and unyielding in evil. We should respect and pray for authority.

(v. 10-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we study God's Word as followers of Jesus Christ, the LORD sets us apart to speak that Word on His behalf. Many don't realize that the Word of God is exactly that – God's words! We should not run off and add our own thoughts to what we think God said, but only highlight and live what His Word actually says.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR WORD, THE BIBLE.

The Joy of the LORD

1 JOHN 1-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Word of God is always relevant. When we are not bound by other distractions, the Bible's commandments become more significant than we ever noticed. For example, God knows everything: past, present, and future. And the Bible also tells us that the joy of the LORD is our strength (**NEHEMIAH 8:10**). With these two things in mind, we need to remember that the battle for goodness and righteousness are harder to fight now than they were in the past. But that fight is worth it! Technology has made our pathway broader, faster paced, and busier than any other time in history. John tells us that we need to trust in the LORD. He reminds us that the joy of the LORD in full abundance is what we achieve when we trust in His Word and live in His ways.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 JOHN 1:1-10

– 1 –

When we gain God's perspective of eternity, we have real joy. The ways of the world do not guarantee you anything past this life.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

When we practice the truth of God, we learn the joy of the LORD. When we follow God, we walk in His light. (v. 5-7)

– 3 –

We are all sinners who, if we confess our sins, have been saved by faith through the grace of Jesus Christ. If we believe anything else, the truth is not in us. (v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

True joy comes when we learn to depend on what God says and not on what anyone else says. The only way to gain eternal life is to come to Him and know Him through the life of His Son, Jesus Christ (**1 JOHN 5:11-13**). When we are people who do not boast or lie about ourselves, we learn that God tells the truth about all of us. *He loves us!*

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME!
I WANT TO WALK IN YOUR LIGHT
EVERY DAY OF MY LIFE. HELP ME
TO DO THAT AND TO PRACTICE THE
TRUTH OF YOUR WORD.

Keep the Truth

2 & 3 JOHN – JUDE

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Truth is a major theme in 2 John. It seems that John is writing to a lady who had the responsibility of a local church. While this is not what the Bible refers to earlier on, it reflects the desire of the Roman Empire to kill the Church as a whole. Women had to take over and become leaders while the men were often killed or imprisoned. John tells the elect lady and her children to keep the truth and to walk in the truth, just as they have heard from the beginning of their salvation, in the LORD Jesus Christ. In fact, John also tells the woman to be careful of some who come teaching a new doctrine. The teaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is truly man and truly God, is true. 2 and 3 John are written to encourage the persecuted Church.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 JOHN 1:1-13

– 1 –

The truth of God is with us when we receive the LORD. There is no new truth, only what God has said.
(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

The Church must walk in the truth of Christ's commandments. We must love one another.
(v. 4-6)

– 3 –

The doctrine of Jesus Christ is essential to the Church. The teaching of the LORD remains in the hearts of those who follow Him.
(v. 7-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The church that John addresses as the *elect lady* is one which holds to the truth of Jesus Christ and His teaching. Any church affiliation that does not hold to the teaching of the LORD Jesus Christ is not a true church. The Church is not a building but is made up of believers who follow the LORD Jesus Christ as the Head.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO WALK
ACCORDING TO YOUR
COMMANDMENTS EVERY DAY.
THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME.**

The Loveless Church

REVELATION 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

In my view, Revelation is the most amazing book of the Bible. The Revelation talks about the end of time and spiritual warfare from a spiritual perspective. In chapter 1, there is an interesting view of Jesus Christ and His authority, but in chapters 2 and 3, although John speaks to the local churches of his time, he also speaks to the present-day Church. Seven churches are mentioned, each having different personalities: (1) the Loveless church, (2) the Persecuted church, (3) the Compromising church, (4) the Corrupt church, (5) the Dead church, (6) the Faithful church, and (7) the Lukewarm church. Only two of these churches have no punishment assigned to them: The Persecuted church and the Faithful church. Following these chapters, the churches are not mentioned again.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 2:1-7

– 1 –

The perseverance of the Loveless church is impressive and powerful.

God will help us, if we do the right thing in the right way. (v. 1-3)

– 2 –

The offence of the Loveless church is that they have left their first love. We

must not get consumed by liturgical matters within the Church and forget people who need the LORD. (v. 4-6)

– 3 –

The tree of eternal life is given to all who overcome. The life of God requires us to give our all to Him.

(v. 7)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The way we succeed as the Church is to come to Christ, repent and follow Him. That has never changed, and it never will. To ask God for His guidance in every area of our life and to follow Him with our whole heart is the best way for us to succeed.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD IDEA AND A GODLY IDEA!

The Revelation

REVELATION 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The word *revelation* comes from the Greek word *apocalypse*, which means “the act of revealing or disclosing, especially a striking disclosure, as of something not before realized.” Even though Revelation is a very spiritually heavy book, it also falls into a distinctive rhythm or pattern. For example, angels seem to be one of the main vehicles who drive the plot and carry out God’s plan; not only are there seven angels over the seven churches in the first three chapters, but there are seven angels with seven trumpets, and seven angels who pour out the seven bowls (or plagues) of God’s wrath. And these events seem to overlap in some ways. From a basic reading of the book, it is not a simple past, present, and future description of events. Revelation seems to be a theological and spiritual explanation for understanding why and how God responds to sin, and those who allowed it to rule on the earth.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 5:1-10

– 1 –

Only the Messiah, Jesus Christ, can open the fate of mankind. God has paid the price for sin so that those who come to Him in repentance can have eternal life. (v. 1-5)

– 2 –

Jesus Christ has perfect vision and power for judgment. He is not held back by the importance of the scroll.
(v. 6-7)

– 3 –

All of Heaven recognizes God’s authority and power to forgive our sin. Worthy is the Lamb! His forgiveness is unique and powerful.
(v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Remember the absolute power of God. He is the one who bore the cost of sin for each and every one of us. He is the one who conquered death. He is our Saviour. Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD!

TODAY’S PRAYER

**LORD, I PRAISE YOUR
POWERFUL NAME!**

The People of God

REVELATION 6–7

DISCOVERING THE WORD

One of the most interesting aspects of Revelation is how visually descriptive John is about heaven and the spiritual world, especially in terms of those who truly follow Jesus Christ; they live with God and grow strong forever. This is the time, here on earth, where we can be born into God's spiritual Kingdom. In other words, eternal life begins now. When we come to Jesus Christ, confess our sins and make Him LORD of our life, He changes us forever — even now, here on earth! We do not begin our eternal life when we die, it begins while we are still living. That is why reading the Word of God now is so important, it prepares us for our eternal purpose with Jesus Christ. God knows our past and future and confronts us in our present, so that we can follow who He is: God.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 7:1–12

– 1 –

The servants of God are protected, before the earth is permanently damaged. God seals and protects those who have taken Him as LORD.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

The 12 tribes of Israel who love Jesus Christ are protected by God. There is only one way we can see the LORD; accepting Jesus Christ as God.

(v. 4-8)

– 3 –

Multitudes are gathered before the throne and the Lamb worshipping God. The LORD has chosen ones not only from Israel, but all nations, cultures and peoples. (v. 9-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD is still calling followers who understand their sin and confess it to Him. Christ has chosen all people, Israel and Gentiles alike, for His Kingdom. Jesus is not bound by culture, ethnicity or favouritism; He supersedes it all and appeals to every culture, ethnic group and person around the world. Make Him LORD of your life today.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED YOU TODAY.
FORGIVE ME OF MY SIN.

The Fifth Angel

REVELATION 8-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Apocalyptic literature is fascinating, but it can also be hard to understand. The fifth angel mentioned in Revelation 9 sounds the fifth trumpet, which brings two things to the surface. First, a star falls from the sky, striking the earth and leaving a spiritual breach in the planet that spews smoke; this seems to be a demonic force. Secondly, from out of the smoke come locusts to the earth which have been given the power of scorpions. They came from the pit of the abyss, or the prison of demons (**COMPARE LUKE 8:31 TO REVELATION 9:11**). This is the first of three woes that affect those without the mark of God. The first four trumpets affect the natural world: the earth, trees, seas and rivers, whereas the fifth trumpet seems to bring about a demonic infestation. The infestation will be so spiritually potent that people will desire death, but it will escape them (**REV. 9:6**), which seems to be one of the unusual effects of these demonic forces.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 9:1-12

– 1 –

The seal of God protects us from demonic destruction. Without God's protection we perish.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

Death will flee from those who desire it and do not know God. The protection of God is eternal life and living for an eternal purpose.

(v. 5-6)

– 3 –

Demonic forces are real and powerful. The LORD protects us from demons and evil from hell.

(v. 7-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD continues to help those who have made their decision to follow God. The LORD protects those who love and follow Him from evil forces, because we are not destined for God's wrath. When we stay close to the LORD, we are far away from danger.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO BE CLOSER TO YOU NOW. HELP ME TO LEARN YOUR WAYS.

Two Witnesses

REVELATION 11-13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Revelation is a book of apocalyptic literature. Within its pages we read about two witnesses. Their names are not mentioned but they have a dramatic role to play in the end of time. Some have suggested that this is just the way God works: with two witnesses to proclaim His judgment (**DEUTERONOMY 17:6**). It seems that for three-and-a-half years these witnesses prophesy in Jerusalem to the people on the earth. This means that there is a limited time for their message, their proclamation will be over. Then, God calls them saying, "Come up here!" and they ascend in a cloud to heaven while their enemies watch. This all takes place between the sixth and seventh trumpets, which the angels will sound. The proclamation of God's Word is both sweet and bitter; sweet because we are saved from our sin, bitter because we have sinned against God.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 11:1-13

– 1 –

The two witnesses will proclaim the Word and ways of God, for a limited

time. Soon, things will change.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

God has given the two witnesses power to do mighty miracles upon the

earth. God is not limited in what He can and will do.

(v. 4-6)

– 3 –

The breath of life from God resurrects the two

witnesses. God gives the gift of eternal life to those who accept His Son, Jesus Christ as LORD.

(v. 7-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD continues to heal and help those who have made the decision to love and devote themselves to His work. The work of God always involves His Word. It is good to know it and put it into practice.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO KNOW YOUR WORD AND APPLY IT IN MY LIFE, EVERY DAY.

God's Final Judgments

REVELATION 14-16

DISCOVERING THE WORD

We were not created to receive God's wrath or His judgment. We have all seen the judgment of man, we can discern the anger of satan, but we have never really seen the wrath of God. The time is coming when the wrath of God will come upon the earth, into our universe. That time is marked in the book of Revelation. The wrath of God is displayed as bowls given to seven angels who will pour them out on the earth. Revelation 15 is a short version of how God prepares His angels to distribute this wrath. The real Temple of God in heaven is opened, from it the wrath of God comes and no one in heaven or earth can enter it because of His anger. In 1 Thessalonians 5:9 the Scripture clearly says, "For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 15:1-8

– 1 –

There will come a time when the wrath of God is complete against sin.

We were not created for sin or its effects, but for God's grace and salvation.

(v. 1)

– 2 –

God has made His judgments known to all.

We will sing to Him in heaven for saving us!

(v. 2-4)

– 3 –

The Temple of the LORD was opened for the expression of God's wrath. The LORD has a time when this will take place.

(v. 5-8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God has a plan that is being fulfilled and will be accomplished. Time was created by Him and it will have an end, at least as we know it. It is God who is eternal, not time itself. We are created as eternal beings in the image of God; those who follow Jesus Christ as LORD will spend eternity with Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, I PRAISE YOUR NAME!
FOR YOU HAVE GIVEN US THE
GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH
JESUS CHRIST.**

Babylon Has Fallen

REVELATION 17-19

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Babylon is a word in the original Hebrew that means “confusion” or “stammering.” It was also an ancient city that had periods of great military strength and political power. It was the Babylonian Empire that destroyed Jerusalem and was responsible for the exile of Judah. Due to its Biblical history the word Babylon in English has become a byword for excessive luxury and wickedness. Interestingly, next only to Jerusalem, Babylon is the second most mentioned city in the Bible. In Hebrew, Jerusalem means “City of Peace.” In the end of time God will judge the city of confusion, or Babylon, for its evil sin and its foolishness in making a living out of marketing, selling and buying. Working was never meant to become the reason that we live, and sin certainly wasn’t either! As humans, our purpose should be eternal. Today, that idea is foolishness to many, but soon the LORD will make fools of everyone who chooses not to follow His will and ways.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 18:1-14

– 1 –

The largest economy in the world is the place which will be destroyed by God. We are people

with eternal purpose, not a temporal one.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

God’s people will be called out before she is destroyed. We must be ready when the LORD

comes!

(v. 4-8)

– 3 –

Even men and women will be sold in Babylon.

The LORD will execute His judgment based on the sins which Babylon violates.

(v. 9-14)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Babylon will be destroyed in one hour; a quick end to a lengthy beginning. In the end, God does not deal slowly when His Word has been ignored. As followers of Christ, we must never ignore the Word of God, but keep it close to our hearts and minds every day.

TODAY’S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR THE TRUTH AND SOLID FOUNDATION OF YOUR WORD IN MY LIFE.

Satan Revealed

REVELATION 20

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The millennium is a unique event in the sequence of eschatology. The millennium is also referred to as the 1,000 year reign because it is presented as a time when certain Christians are resurrected to reign with Christ and judge. It's a time when satan's influence is also removed. What will mankind do when we don't have satan to blame for our evil? Especially when God is plainly revealed as God! Everyone will know who He is and what His authority is all about.

It is important to notice here that the Bible also tells about the ultimate demise of satan and the demise of all of those who follow his lead when he returns at the end of the 1,000 years. There will be those who argue, but I choose to take these 1,000 years as a literal time frame. While it's true that the Bible uses symbols and metaphors, this event appears to be speaking of an actual time frame of the future.

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 20:1–15

– 1 –

Satan is nothing more than a smart fallen angel. We have disobeyed God and allowed satan to penetrate our lives.

(v. 1–3)

– 2 –

God's saints are rewarded for not participating in satan's rule. God always rewards and keeps those who love Him, forever.

(v. 4–6)

– 3 –

Satan is released again, and fails at his attempt to usurp God. The LORD will judge everyone according to the decision they have made.

(v. 7–15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD keeps track of all the decisions we make in our lifetime. If we choose to give our life to follow the One called Jesus Christ, then that most important decision is covered in His atoning blood. If we do not accept His gift of salvation, we will be judged by the decisions we have made and why we made them.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO BE A LIGHT IN THIS WORLD, TO LIVE OUT YOUR GOSPEL MESSAGE, AND TELL OTHERS THAT YOU ARE COMING AGAIN SOON.

The New City

REVELATION 21

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Much attention is given to Jerusalem, the city of peace, as we near the end of the Bible. In Revelation 21 we learn about the New Jerusalem, a great and holy city that comes down out of heaven from God. The description is given with great detail.

One might ask why so much detail would be given with regards to its measurements in apocalyptic literature. As we study this passage, let's try to learn what the LORD is telling us about the new city, and why. Revelation 21:9-21 lists the details of New Jerusalem with her unique walls, gates, streets and foundations. Each of the twelve gates and the twelve foundations have names written on them: the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Church. How can the tribes and the Church co-exist in eternity?

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 21:9–21

– 1 –

God does not forget His tribes and His nation.

Israel is still a part of the end of time.

(v. 9-13)

– 2 –

The Church is a foundation of God's plan.

The LORD does not ignore His Church.

(v. 14)

– 3 –

The New Jerusalem is described as an ingenious piece of God's work.

Supernatural is something beyond our world.

(v. 15-21)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Bible is a supernatural book because it speaks in supernatural ways with views of things beyond this physical world. When we read the Bible we should be careful not to read our culture and ideas into it but rather to learn and read out of it. The Bible should be allowed to speak for itself and correct our thinking.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND YOUR VAST AND SUPERNATURAL NATURE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR PLAN AND PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE.

God Rewards

REVELATION 22

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Many live their lives for the here and now, not stopping to consider what will happen or where they will go when they die. If the average lifespan is between 80-100 years, while eternity is forever, where will we spend the most time? This year has been very trying for all of us. Our governments and top medical advisors shut society down and asked us to socially distance so as not to spread infection. This has shown us all the different ways people cope. Some of us support strict lockdowns in the hopes of getting over the worst of this sickness quickly. Others struggle with worry, stress and hopelessness to find comfort in spending their lives behind locked doors. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention lists suicide as the 10th leading cause of death in the USA. Sadly, in 2018 there were 48,344 suicide deaths. In Canada there were over 4,100 deaths and the rates are going up. We need to think carefully about life. We need to come to Jesus Christ and give our lives to Him. The LORD loves us immensely and has a plan and an eternal purpose that begins for each of us, here and now!

DISCOVERING GOD – REVELATION 22:12–17

– 1 –

God has His rewards with Him. Our aim should be to live like Jesus, doing the will of the Father.

(v. 12–13)

– 2 –

God has made the boundaries between sin and righteousness. We must be serious about our life commitment to Christ.

(v. 14–15)

– 3 –

Come to the LORD Jesus Christ, now! Today is the day for salvation from death to life.

(v. 16–17)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The best way to end this year is with the truth of the good news: Jesus Christ. He lived a perfect life, fully God and fully Man. His blood was shed and He died for us to buy our freedom from sin, once and for all; to give us the gift of eternal life. What amazing grace!

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, FORGIVE ME FOR MY SINS,
I NEED YOU NOW. THANK YOU
FOR YOUR LOVE AND AMAZING
GRACE FOR ME!**

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