

Worship in the Book of Revelation



SABBATH—SEPTEMBER 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Job 42:1–6; Revelation 1:13–18; Revelation 13; Revelation 14:6–12; Revelation 19:1–5.

MEMORY VERSE: “Then everyone sang a new song in front of the throne. They sang it in front of the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000. They had been set free from the evil of the earth” (Revelation 14:3, NlrV).

NO BOOK OF THE BIBLE HOLDS AS MUCH MYSTERY AS REVELATION DOES. The book of Revelation is filled with symbols such as beasts and a dragon and fire and earthquakes and plagues and armies and frogs and cities and falling stars and so on.

But the theme that most often appears is worship. Revelation deals with the final days of those who worship the beast and its image. And it shows people in heaven who sing praises to God. But Revelation does come back again and again to worship: (1) worship of Him who “lives for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:14, NKJV), (2) worship of Him “who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned [ruled]” (Revelation 11:17, NKJV), and (3) worship of the One who is to receive “glory [praise] and honor and power” (Revelation 4:11, NKJV).

In short, Revelation shows what we have been studying all quarter. It shows that the Lord alone—our Creator, our Savior, our Judge—is worthy of our worship and praise.

SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 18**“I FELL AT HIS FEET AS DEAD”
(Revelation 1:13–18, NKJV)**

Perhaps one of the greatest examples that we have been given of the power of God has come to us through the study of stars. Most of the people living long ago had no idea of the huge size of the universe. In the twentieth century, with the wonderful improvements made on different telescopes, we have been given a view of the universe that would have puzzled people of long ago. Really, we ourselves are puzzled by the size and distances of galaxies and stars. We cannot fully understand the universe at all.

And here is the surprise! Only something greater than the universe could have created the universe. In the same way, only something greater than a painting could have created the painting. So, the God whom we worship, the God whom we serve, is the Creator of the universe. And He is greater than it all.

Who are we then in comparison to such a God?

Read Revelation 1:13–18 about John’s vision of Jesus. How does John feel about it? Why would he act in that way? How is the Cross shown here?

How does Job’s action in Job 42:1–6 compare (equal) with John’s?



One of the greatest examples of God’s majesty and power comes to us through the study of the stars.

Both of these men were given only part of the vision of the Lord. What they saw was enough to make them very humble. There was fear, deep respect, and a sense of repentance¹ in how they acted toward their visions. They were getting a view of the Creator of the universe. Moreover, they were sinful beings getting a view of a sinless and holy God. No doubt, they came to the full understanding of their own sinfulness in the Lord’s presence.

How should our worship services make us feel the same way that John and Job did when they saw God? We should be given a sense of the presence of God, a sense that should make us feel humble. At the same time, why is it important that the Cross be lifted up to us as our only hope of salvation?

1. repentance—the act of feeling sorry for having sinned and then turning away from sinning with the help of the Holy Spirit.

MONDAY—SEPTEMBER 19**“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY”
(Revelation 4:8–11)**

The book of Revelation still holds many mysteries. But an important theme comes through time and time again. This theme is worship. All through Revelation are scenes of different people and angels worshipping the Lord.

What can we learn about worship from Revelation 4:8–11; Revelation 5:8–14; Revelation 7:9–12; Revelation 11:15–19; Revelation 15:1–4; and Revelation 19:1–5? What themes appear here that we have studied throughout this quarter?

Revelation can teach us many things. But one thing is very important: what happens on earth influences heaven. And what happens in heaven influences earth. Heaven and earth are closer than we might think. Revelation shows us just how close. Time and again the people and angels in heaven are worshipping God for what He has done on earth.

What themes of praise and worship have we been studying all quarter? The themes are the Lord as Creator, the Lord as Savior, and the Lord as Judge. He is praised for His holiness. He is praised for sacrificing (giving up) His life for all of us. He is praised and worshiped for His power and for His honor. He is praised for His justice and judgment

and for the salvation that He offers.

Think again through the plan of salvation. Think about what it means and what God has given us through it. We have so much to praise God for. No matter what your troubles are, take time every day to praise the Lord for all that you have to be thankful about. It will change your life.



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And what happens in heaven influences earth.

TUESDAY—SEPTEMBER 20**REVELATION 13: THE BEAST
AND HIS IMAGE
(Revelation 13)**

From our introduction onward, we have studied how the last days will center around the question of worship. The issue of worship is not a small matter. The future of each soul depends on it. This important truth becomes clearer in Revelation 13 and 14.

Read Revelation 13 and answer the following questions:

- 1. What is the historical background of these verses? What are the verses talking about**

in connection with history and prophecy?²

2. How often does the theme of worship appear in this chapter? What does that tell us about how important it is?
3. Where is the gospel (the salvation offered to us in Christ) given in this chapter?

From the beginning of the great controversy (war between Christ and Satan), Satan tried to destroy the authority and power of God. The battle that Satan started in heaven is now being fought on the earth. This chapter shows the enemy's (Satan's) work through history. And this chapter also shows how it will end in the last struggle over the issue of worship. It will be about those who do not worship the beast and his image. They will face great suffering from the enemy. Satan knows that he is defeated. He knows that at the Cross it was over for him. But he still continues to fight. He still continues to deceive (trick) as many as he can. And he will do so right up to the end.

But we still have Revelation 13:8. This verse speaks of Jesus as "the Lamb slain [killed] from the foundation [beginning] of the world." This means that even before this war began on earth, the "everlasting covenant"³ (Hebrews 13:20) had been in place. It has offered all humans the opportunity for salvation. Those

who truly have accepted that salvation, and those whose names are in the book of life, shall not worship the beast or his image. They worship the One (Jesus) who "washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5). And we will be doing the same, worshipping Him, in heaven too.



All who worship the beast power will face great suffering.

WEDNESDAY—SEPTEMBER 21

REVELATION 14 (Revelation 14:6–12)

Revelation 14 opens with what? It is a heavenly scene, showing the 144,000 who were "redeemed [saved] from the earth" (verse 3). It starts out with a vision of the future for this group when they stand in front of God in heaven. The verse does not come

2. prophecy—a special message from God, often an explanation of what will happen in the future.

3. covenant—promise or agreement between God and His people.

right out and say it, but this scene certainly seems to show some kind of heavenly worship.

So, Revelation 14 continues the theme of worship found in chapter 13. These people did not worship the beast and his image. Instead, they are worshiping their Lord in heaven.

The chapter then returns to earth. It picks up where chapter 13 left off. It shows those who worshiped the beast and his image and those who would not. The second group of people have had their names written in the book of life.

Why is Revelation 14:6–12 so important to us as Seventh-day Adventists? What themes appear here that we have been looking at all quarter? Why do we call these verses “present truth”?

These verses are rich and ripe with truth: Creation, judgment, salvation, the gospel, obedience, faith, the Ten Commandments, mission. Here, too, we find the most serious warning in all the Bible. And it focuses on the question of worship: “The smoke of your terrible suffering will rise for ever and ever. Day and night, there is no rest for you who worship the beast and his statue [copy]. There is no rest for you who receive the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:11, Nlrv).

As Seventh-day Adventists, we understand how important the seventh-day Sabbath is to the whole picture. The Sabbath is very tied in with Creation and with worship. We worship the Lord because He is the

Creator. And the Sabbath has been, and still remains, the important sign of Jesus’ work as Creator.

We still do not know when, and how, these issues will happen in the future. But we can be sure that they will. So it is very important that we be ready to stand firm for the truth and be ready “to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. . . . But do it gently and with respect” (1 Peter 3:15, Nlrv).



Those who worshiped God had their names written in the book of life.

THURSDAY—SEPTEMBER 22

“WORSHIP GOD” (Revelation 22:8, 9)

Read Revelation 22:8, 9. What is the important message about worship found here?

All quarter we have found the same thing over and over: humans have

this important need to worship. Even good things. Here John wants to worship the angel who has shown him such wonderful truth. But John is told not to worship the angel. He is told to worship God instead.

This is not the first time John has had this experience. In Revelation 19:10, John is going to do the same thing again. And again, the angel stops him and tells him to worship the Lord. It reminds us of Christ's words to Satan: " 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve' " (Matthew 4:10, NlrV).

In both cases, too, John fell at the feet of Jesus, whom he sought to worship. This is a symbol of surrender and deep respect for God, who deserves worship. Anything else is not really worship, is it?

And that is because worship is not just about what we do on Sabbath for a few hours each week. Worship is about falling at the feet of our Lord all the time. It is about our entire attitude (feeling) and relationship to God. Worship is what we should be doing all the time. It is about living a life of faith, of obedience, and of surrender to the Lord. Worship is about putting God first in all that we say, all that we do, and all that we think. Worship is how we treat others. Worship is how we treat those we love, and those who are hard to love. Worship is about obeying the commandments. It is about helping those in need. It is about dying to self and preaching the gospel.

Again, think about the Creation. Think about the God who created the

Creation. Then think about the Cross. Think about the Creator dying for the sins of those whom He had created. Think deeply about how He accepted the punishment that sinful people deserved. In this way we could have the chance of being recreated in a new heaven and a new earth.

Because God created all life on earth, anything else we worship cannot save us at all. But keeping in mind the Creator on the cross, why would we want to worship anything or anyone else? It is Jesus only, our Creator, who is worthy of our worship.

FRIDAY—SEPTEMBER 23

ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read Ellen G. White, "The Impending [Coming] Conflict," pages 582–592; "The Final Warning," pages 603–612, "The Controversy Ended," pages 662–678, in *The Great Controversy*.

"Worship is kneeling low in front of our Maker. In doing so, we recognize [know] and accept the fact that He is holy and that He has created us. It is surrendering to Him as our King and to His great ability to rule as King." —Adapted from Richard M. Davidson, Andrews University, *Worship in the Old Testament* (used by permission of the author), page 3.

"The writer of Psalms says: 'Serve the Lord and have respect for him [God]. Serve him with joy and trembling' (Psalm 2:11, NlrV). In worship we recognize the great rulership and power of the King. We remember that '[Our] God is like a fire that burns

everything up' (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29, NIV). That would quickly destroy us if it were not for the sacrifice of Jesus as our Substitute. He was 'burned up' on the altar of Calvary [place of His death] in our place.

"So our worship will keep a balance between joy and respectful fear. It will be a holy joy. . . . Our worship must be very deep and serious . . . but full of joy."—Adapted from Richard M. Davidson, page 30.

"The redeemed [saved] raise a song of praise that echoes and re-echoes through the highest reaches of heaven: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne. Salvation also belongs to the Lamb,' verse 10 [of Revelation 7, NIV]. . . .

"Among all that shining crowd of people, none of them can claim that they deserve credit for salvation. . . . All the suffering they have gone through on earth becomes noth-

ing to them as their only one goal is to sing, 'Salvation to our God and unto the Lamb.'"—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, page 665.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① In class, discuss more deeply the plan of salvation, the miracle of Jesus as God becomes man, His sinless life and death for us, and the promise of His second coming. Why does all this make Christ so worthy of worship?
- ② What are some of the ways that we worship the Lord when we are not in church service? If we are not worshipping the Lord all the time, can we truly worship Him for a few hours on Sabbath? Discuss your answer.
- ③ What are some "good" things that we could be in danger of worshipping?