

NT LESSON #46

**“HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM AND THEY SHALL BE HIS PEOPLE”**

(Revelation 5,6; 19-22)

by Ted L. Gibbons

**INTRODUCTION:** Did anyone ever spoil a movie for you by telling you the ending before you attended? Have you video-taped an athletic contest to watch at a later date, only to have someone tell you the final score before you had the chance to watch the event for yourself? There is a certain excitement in participating in (or watching) a dramatic incident without knowing the outcome. But what if the incident is one involving the entire world—the history of all mankind and the success or failure of the Kingdom of God on the earth? No one who loves the Lord and his work wants the final score kept a secret.

And it has not been. In the Garden of Eden the Father told Satan that while he might have some successes—“thou shalt bruise his heel”—in the end, righteousness and the eternal destiny of man would triumph through the intercession of Christ and the work of the atonement: “He shall bruise thy head.” (Moses 4:21)

Again, at the end of the Bible. The Lord affirmed this simple and most rewarding truth: “In the end, the good guys win.” This is of course the message of the book of Revelation. In a world tumbling wholesale into apostasy, a world where persecution intensified and the kingdom seemed to be in rapid retreat, John sent this message within the pages of this wonderful book: *In the end, the kingdom of God and Christ will be established for eternity and all the blessings promised to the faithful will be theirs forever and ever.*

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Rev. 21:1-7)

We know how the contest ends. The drama lies not in the outcome but in the choices of the individual participants. Where will we be when the earth becomes a celestial world and the righteous are invited to inherit it forever?

## **I. SATAN FIGHTS AGAINST THE RIGHTEOUS (Rev. 5, 6)**

John had just had a remarkable vision. He saw the throne of God,

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald (Revelation 4:3).

He who sat upon the throne “had in the right hand . . . a book written within, and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.” (Rev. 5:1) That book contained a record of the history of the world, each of the seals representing 1000 years of the earth’s temporal history.

Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed on the back with seven seals?

A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its

temporal existence (D&C 77:6).

Nephi had a vision of many of these same things, but he was not permitted to write them:

And behold, the things which this apostle of the Lamb shall write are many things But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them. And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity, according to the truth which is in the Lamb, in the own due time of the Lord, unto the house of And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John, according to the word of the angel (1 Nephi 14:24 - 27).

Perhaps brother of Jared was one of those “others” spoken of in the verses above.

. . . and when the Lord had said these words, he showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth. For he had said unto him in times before, that if he would believe in him that he could show unto him all things--it should be shown unto him; therefore the Lord could not withhold anything from him, for he knew that the Lord could show him all things. (Ether 3:25.26)

The brother of Jared was commanded to write the things which he had seen, and Moroni informed us that he, Moroni, had “written upon [the] plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw.” (Ether 4:4) Having written these things. Moroni was commanded to “seal them up.” (Ether 4:5)

Nephi wrote of this record, “And behold the book shall be sealed; and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof.” (2 Nephi 27:7)

Thus we have knowledge of records which were written and sealed up, revelations

of the history of the world “from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof.”

John’s longing to know the content of the book he saw was perhaps much like ours to know the content of the sealed portion of the plates received by Joseph. “I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and read the book . . .” (Rev. 5:5)

But the Lamb was worthy. He took the book and opened the seals (see Rev. 6:1, ff). As he took the book, the 24 elders mentioned in Revelation 4:4,10 (see the JST for these verses), and in Rev. 5:8 fell down before him to worship him. Their praise is enlightening:

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 9,10)

In this kingdom we know of only one way to become “unto our God kings and priests” and that has to do with temple work and the endowment. In years past, reading that the endowed of *every nation* would reign on the earth with the Savior has been a concept almost impossible to comprehend. But all that has changed now. We now have about 115 temples. We have a prophet who had found a way to take the blessings of the temple to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people where there are enough members and where there is enough faith for the work to be accomplished.

In About mid October I visited the Redlands, California temple, at that time the most recently dedicated. I was reminded of a visit and a session in the Colonia Juarez, Mexico Temple four years ago. It was after a visit to this location that President Hinckley received the inspiration for “small” temples, temples with all the ordinances and opportunities of the larger ones, but to be made available on a much wider basis. I had a lovely experience in that tiny Mexican temple in a small community in an area with essentially two stakes. The youth there told me that those who were able had traveled 25 hours by bus to Mexico City to do baptisms for the dead in previous years, but they would not have to make that journey again. We can now truly begin to visualize the fulfillment of John’s vision. We may in our lifetime see “unto our God kings and priests” from every nation.

And John the Revelator recorded that the faithful in latter days would praise the Lord by saying: "Thou art worthy for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:9-10.)

That is, before the millennial era, before the time when Christ shall reign personally upon the earth, the elect of God among every kindred, the saints who speak every tongue, the converts among all peoples and nations, having first believed the restored gospel, will go to the temples of God and receive the ordinances of exaltation whereby they qualify to become kings and priests. (Bruce R. McConkie, Conference Report, April 1969, p.144)

In Revelation 6, some of the seals are opened, and we have the opportunity to see the efforts of Satan to destroy the work of God on the earth. Note the following phrases indicative of the things Lucifer tries to accomplish among the children of God. How many of them are still occurring in our day?

(vs. 4) "take peace from the earth"

(vs. 4) "that they should kill one another"

(vs. 6) "a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny" (famine)

(vs. 8) "the sword"

(vs. 8) "hunger"

(vs. 8) "death"

(vs. 9) "slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they had"

This war between good and evil began in heaven and continues on earth:

President Hinckley based his message in the October on a New Testament scripture—Rev. 12:7-12. There, John the Revelator speaks of the war in heaven, the casting out of Satan and the triumph of Christ.

That war, so bitter, so intense, has gone on, and it has never ceased. It is the war between truth and error, between agency and compulsion, between the followers of Christ and those who have denied Him. His enemies have used every stratagem in that conflict. They've indulged in lying and deceit. They've employed money and wealth. They've tricked the minds of men. They've murdered and destroyed and engaged in every other unholy and impure practice to thwart the work of Christ.

It began in the earth when Cain slew Abel. The Old Testament is replete with accounts of the same eternal struggle.

It found expression in the vile accusations against the Man of Galilee, the Christ, who healed the sick and lifted men's hearts and hopes, He who taught the gospel of peace. His enemies, motivated by that evil power, seized Him, tortured Him, nailed Him [page 43] to the cross, and spoke in mockery against Him. But by the power of His godhood, He overcame the death His enemies had inflicted and through His sacrifice brought salvation from death to all men.

That eternal war went on in the decay of the work He established, in the corruption which later infected it, when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people (see Isa. 60:2).

But . . . the war was not over. It was renewed and redirected. There was contempt. There was persecution. There were drivings from one place to another. There was the murder of the young prophet of God and his beloved brother. . . . Today the war continues as the Church seems to be constantly under attack from one quarter or another. However, the Church moves forward (Gordon B. Hinckley, "The War We Are Winning," *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 42.434).

Revelation gives some information about the opening of each seal. The distribution of emphasis on the various seals is interesting:

The first 5 seals [from the time of the Fall to about the year 1000AD] are discussed in Revelation 6:1-11.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Seal [c. 1000-2000 AD] comprises 14 verses, from Revelation 6:12 through 7:8.

7<sup>th</sup> Seal [c. 2000-3000 AD] is discussed in 201 verses, from Revelation 8:1 through 19:21.

There are 15 verses for the millennium and the final scenes. I wish I had the time to spend with you on the material in chapters 8-18, but let us skip the lessons on plagues and destructions and rush to the Savior's final conquest of Satan and his works

In Revelation 19, the Lord comes. His coming and his meeting with the righteous is symbolized as a wedding feast. This is a wonderful image, a continuation of the frequent description of Christ as a bridegroom and Israel as an often unfaithful bride. (See Isaiah 61:10,11; 62:5; Matt. 25:1-13; D&C 33:17; 65:3, etc.) You might want to note in your scriptures that the word *servants* in 19:2,5 was changed to *saints* in the JST.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (Rev. 19:7).

Finally the church is *ready* for the coming of the Lord. The world has probably been ready for a long time, festering in iniquity and awaiting the destructions of the Second Coming. But there is a need of kings and priests to reign on the earth for a thousand years. That preparation will require substantial preparation. But now, "his wife hath made herself ready."

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Rev. 19:8)

The bride is arrayed in a robe, a marriage robe, as it were, or a wedding dress, a robe representing the "righteousness of the saints." If in fact we weave our wedding garment by our righteousness, what does our robe look like?

- A long, beautiful garment, clean and white and of fine linen?
- A pair of cut-offs?
- A loin-cloth?

John is commanded to write the invitation:

**“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper  
of the Lamb”**

At this same time, Satan is bound.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season (Rev. 20:1-2).

Some discussion has occurred about the binding of Satan. Is he bound by the power of God as is described above, or by the righteousness of the saints (see 1 Nephi 22:26)? Perhaps the answer is that he is bound by power, and his binding is maintained by the righteousness of men on the earth. If Satan has “no power over the hearts of the people” (1 Nephi 22:26), he has no power anywhere. Someone once asked in a religion class how such a change in the world was possible. How could this earth be transformed from a place of brutality and wickedness to a place of peace and righteousness in such a short period of time? The answer given by the teacher was (and I quote) “You kill the wicked and scare the heck out of the righteousness.” (For more on the binding of Satan, see D&C 29:22; 43:31; 88:11)

It will therefore not do for us to wait for the arrival of the Bridegroom to bind Satan. We must be about it now. Our own righteousness must restrict his influence *now* in our lives and the lives of those we love. The war of which President Hinckley spoke earlier in the lesson is being waged now. The crisis is now. The battle lines are being drawn now, and “we are all enlisted” (*Hymns*, 250) on one side or the other.

At the end of the millennium when Satan is loosed “for a little season,” the final battle between good and evil will take place. Satan and his followers will be cast into outer darkness, “and there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth . . .”



And then shall it come to pass, that the spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil--for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house--and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil. (Alma 40:13)

### **III. AFTER THE LAST JUDGEMENT, THE RIGHTEOUS WILL DWELL WITH GOD (Rev. 20:12-22:21)**

What does Revelation 20:12, 13 suggest about the judgement? On what basis will men be judged? What three things does Alma say will be considered when we stand before God on judgement day?

For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence. (Alma 12:14)

We learn from 2 Nephi 2:18 and 27 that Lucifer seeketh “that all men might be miserable like unto himself.” The same chapter teaches that “men are that they might have joy.” (2 Nephi 2:25) Read the description in Revelation of what will happen to misery when Christ dwells on the earth during 1000 years:

And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:* for the former things are passed away. (Rev. 21:3,4, *emphasis added*)

We will indeed have joy! Part of that Joy will come from the opportunity to dwell with God in the holy city. A description of that city is given in Revelation 21:10-27. Read it and consider the implications.

“The city lieth foresquare,” John tells us, and he should know. He saw the place in vision (21:10) “The length is as large as the breadth . . . the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal[!]” The city is a cube, equal on all sides. And the sides are 12000 furlongs. The footnotes tell us that a furlong is about 607 English feet, or 185.2 meters. Thus one side of this city is equal to 12000 X 607 feet, for a total on each side of 7,2284,000 feet, or 1,379.5 miles on a side. I do not mean to declare that all of this is to be taken with absolute literalness. Perhaps it is. I do not know. But what I do know is that the promises of the Lord are sure, and of this city he promised

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:27)

And when I read that, I know where I want to live, no matter what the city is shaped like.

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

This lesson marks the end of the New Testament Course of Study for Gospel Doctrine. I pray it will not mark the end of your study of the New Testament. You will return of course in four years to this volume, and again in four years after that. But I am convinced that you cannot learn the scriptures from anyone. You can learn about them—a great deal about them, it is true—but you can only learn them from the Spirit as you pay a personal price of study and prayer. Elder Maxwell said,

On very thin pages thick with meaning, are some almost hidden scriptures. Hence we are urged to *search, feast and ponder*. (*Ensign*, November 1999, p. 6. *Emphasis in original*)

Now as this experience of mine comes to a close, may I share by way of testimony an experience and an application from my life as a young father many years ago, an experience that taught me that I must trust the Savior with all my heart. I have changed one name.

I trusted Brock to remodel the house. He showed me his temple recommend and talked about his missionary work and explained what he would do to make our

disintegrating rambler liveable and loveable, and we took out a loan for \$30,000 and gave him all of it before he began. I know you are shaking your heads in consternation, wondering how a being with a functioning brain in this century could have made so mindless a move. But I was young, and the sheltered existence I had endured growing up in Logan had never prepared me for the predators waiting. My wife and I trusted him and paid him in full in advance.

He began the work with substantial zeal, and we watched the growing expanse of new siding with anticipation and pride. Then his visits diminished in frequency and our letters and calls went unanswered and finally the work stopped. Next thing we knew, he was in Costa Rica or Texas or some other foreign country, and we were obliged to borrow more money and find a new contractor to get the work finished. In all the years since I have never given my trust so freely again. I want someone's name somewhere with penalties and guarantees and late fees written into the contract, and I want the whole arrangement notarized, with me holding most of the money until the work is done.

But the most important lesson I have learned about trust, I did not learn from Brock. At the same time Lydia and I were agonizing over the debacle of our half-finished remodeling, my oldest son was teaching me what trust is really all about. He taught me in a lesson that lasted only an instant, and he taught it so well that the message burned itself into my bones.

Chris liked to jump. He walked early (he never crawled till kindergarten when someone taught him to crawl so that he could learn to read). And one day in his infancy he climbed on a chair while I was laying on the floor. I held out my arms and said, "Jump, Chris," and he did. I caught him and he laughed. Then he wanted to show Mom. She came and he repeated his leap and laughed some more, and she hugged him, so he showed her once more. We tried it again and again, and as the weeks and months passed, he graduated from chairs to the kitchen table and finally to the top of the old upright, a Zeck Standard Quality piano so tall that he could barely perch on top without hitting his head on the ceiling.

He leapt to me from the railing of the front porch when he was four, from the top of the car when he was five, and from the shed roof when he was six. And I caught him. The frequency of his airborne adventures decreased with the passing years. He had less interest, and he weighed more, so my enthusiasm was tempered by three

back surgeries and my regard for the integrity of my spinal column.

I never missed him. I never came close to missing him. This was due as much to luck as to skill. I have scars enough on this old body to prove that I am not infallible. But the years passed and every time he jumped, I caught him.

So, it was this kind of confidence that made possible the thing that happened. He and I were at Alma Heaton's for a family home evening, playing in the back yard. Johnny Carson called the space behind Alma Heaton's house the most exciting back yard in America. It probably is. Chris had climbed into a tree that supports one end of a platform at the back of the yard. He was about 12-14 feet off the ground. From that landing he could swing out over the lawn on a rope, or bounce to the ground and back on thick bungee cords. I was not paying attention to my 8-year-old. I had watched him climb, decided he was safe, and turned around to observe another child at play. Suddenly I heard his voice: "Catch, Dad!"

I knew from his inflection that he was already in the air! This was not a call for preparation. This was a call for action. "Catch, Dad!" I whirled and he hit my chest laughing, wrapping his little boy arms around my neck while I scrabbled backward, trying desperately to secure him and to retain my balance. When I was in control, I set him down and he dashed off. I watched him leap to grab the handle on the pulley that stretches across the yard, and bowed my head in relief that he was safe.

And then I remembered a scripture—my wife's favorite verses—from Proverbs 3:5,6. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart . . ." and "lean not unto thine own understanding" Chris jumped to me when I wasn't looking. He saw me standing below, knew he was safe, and threw himself into space. I would have made much more sense for him to stand in the tree wondering: is he looking? Is he ready? Will he miss me or drop me? Am I too high? But none of that occurred. He simply trusted, with all his heart, and jumped, knowing that his father would never let him fall.

From time to time, I find myself in the tree, elevated there by financial struggles and less than perfect parenting and employment challenges and church callings that stupefy me. I know that the Father has said He will catch me and carry me (Isaiah 46:3,4); I know that He has never let me fall before. But I hesitate, not certain that I

have the trust to throw myself into the haven of His arms without the certainty of his gaze upon me and the assurance of his waiting arms to rescue me. I sit in the tree, leaning on my own understanding. "Trust me," He is saying. "Do it my way," He invites. "I'm here, and I will not let you fall" He promises.

"Except ye become converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). I think I have become converted, but I have not yet become as a little child. I am not yet as trusting of my Father as Chris was of his. I am not yet able to throw myself into His invisible, inevitable arms because of my trust in Him and His promises. But I want to.

With all my heart, I want to.

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Thanks for a great year, my LDSLiving friends and neighbors.

Ted L. Gibbons

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