

Quarter 4 Lesson 13
Sixth Grade
Jesus Wins!
Revelation

Memory Verse: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

Revelation 22:13

Background

Revelation is the last book of the Bible which was written by the apostle John when he was exiled on the island of Patmos.

Revelation 1:1-2 says, **"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the Word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw."**

So what happened? An angel was sent to John to reveal to him a prophecy through a series of visions. It came from God through Jesus. Revelation is addressed to seven specific churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos (Pergamum), Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Revelation is filled with strange symbols, images, and numbers: a throne with flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, bizarre creatures, a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, a Lamb opening seven seals, and many more. Just as these symbolisms sound odd to us today, similarly, some of the expressions we use today in our English language would be equally hard for first century Christians to understand. In school you have studied the use of idioms, phrases or expressions which have a meaning totally different from the words of which they are made. Think about some of the idioms you may use or have heard others use: barking up the wrong tree (looking in the wrong place); beat around the bush (avoiding the main topic); straight from the horse's mouth (to hear something from a source who knows). Christians from the first century would find it difficult to figure out what on earth we are talking about when we use these expressions in conversation. However, we can be sure that the Christians who read this book understood its meanings. Revelation was written during a time of great persecution in the church. Because of this constant threat, these "coded" messages would have helped conceal from outsiders what was specifically intended for the church. Our focus in this lesson will not be to address the meanings of Revelation's symbolisms but to think about the messages meant for the seven churches to whom it was written.



Locations of the seven churches showing the main Roman roads and the Island of Patmos where John was exiled and wrote Revelation. (From freebibleimages.org)

Ephesus

Ephesus was famed for the Temple of Artemis (Diana) which was completed around 550 B.C. and was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It had an amphitheater capable of holding 25,000 spectators.

To the church at Ephesus, John writes in chapter 2, “2 ***I know your works, your toil, your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.*** 3 ***I know*** you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. 4 ***But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first..***

5 ***Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the works you did at first.***” It seems that this church was losing its zeal for doing the works it had done during its earlier years. Perhaps they were spending more time doing a “check list” of good works than they were fulfilling the original commands they had been given. Perhaps they had “works” but were not showing faith. Perhaps their desire to spread the gospel was beginning to



wane. The Ephesian church was told to repent so they could "...eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

Smyrna

Smyrna was a Greek city which vied with Ephesus for first place in the province. It was called "the most beautiful of all cities under the sun." Smyrna was one of the oldest and most faithful of the allies of Rome, having erected a temple to the goddess Roma. It also contained a temple which had an inscription honoring Nero as "the Savior of the whole human race."

To the church at Smyrna John wrote in 2: 9, "***I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich) and the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested,...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.***"

Jesus is warning them that they were going to endure persecutions, but they should remain faithful so that they could inherit a home in heaven.



Pergamos (Pergamum)

Pergamos (Pergamum) had become the chief center of the Roman emperor-worship with no less than three temples being erected there to Roman emperors. It also had temples to Zeus, Athena, and other mythical gods.

To the church at Pergamos John writes in chapter 2, "***13 I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast My name, and did not deny My faith...14 But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam,...(to) eat food sacrificed to idols, and to practice sexual immorality...Repent.***"

Here "Satan's throne" may be referring to a huge altar to Zeus which was 40' high and carved like a great throne into the face of the mountain dominating



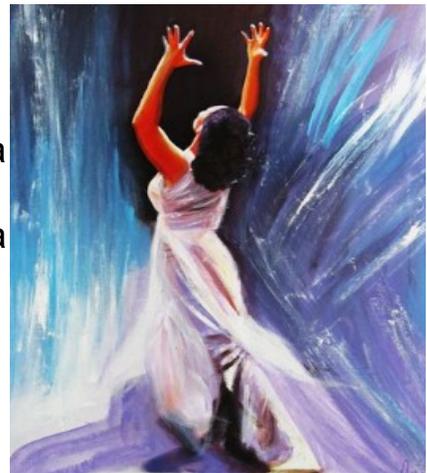
the city. “ Balaam” refers to false teachers who were leading some astray. They were told to repent.

Thyatira

Thyatira was famous for its dye industry and trade guilds, which had their own deities and temples. The feasts of these guilds tended to be obscene and practiced all kinds of immoralities. Lydia, the seller of purple who became a Christian, was from this city.

Of Thyatira, Revelation 2 says, “ **19 I know your works, your love and faith and service and patient endurance, and that your latter works exceed the first. 20 But I have this against you ...**”

It seems that the church in Thyatira continued to grow in its good works but failed to correct one of its members who was willfully engaged in sin. There was a woman in this church who called herself a prophetess and her sinful teaching and immoral actions were like a cancer gnawing away at the congregation. She had been given time to repent but refused to do so. Therefore, the Lord said He was going to punish her. Verse 23 says, “**...And all the churches will know that I am He who searches mind and heart, and I will give to each of you according to your works.**”

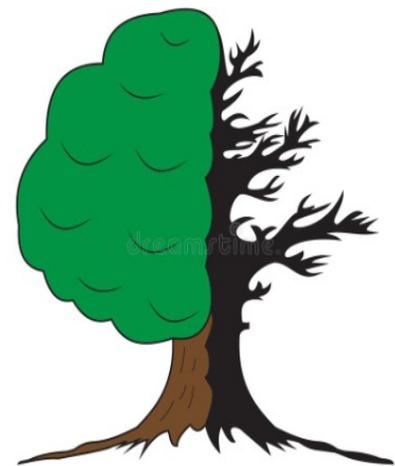


Sardis

Sardis was once a city of wealth which was ultimately destroyed and never rebuilt.

To the church at Sardis, Revelation 3 says, “**1...I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of My God....3 and repent...**”

Although we find in verse 4 that not all of the members were unfaithful, it seems that the majority had compromised their faith. This church had a good reputation in the community, but many were Christians in name only...basically, benchwarmers. They were warned to repent or suffer the consequences.



Alive

Dead

Philadelphia

Philadelphia was located above a fault causing it to suffer great destruction in the earthquake of 17 A.D and to have recurring quakes for many years thereafter. However, there were many temples and centers of learning in the city.

The Lord offered no condemnation to the church at Philadelphia but rather gave words of praise and encouragement. He said in chapter 3, 8 ***“I know your works...you have kept My Word and have not denied My Name...10...you have kept My Word about patient endurance,... 11...Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.”***



Laodicea

Laodicea was a banking center with a great deal of wealth. One of the great industries there was that of wool and woolen garments. Another industry was that of drugs developed in connection with the medical school there.

To the Laodiceans John writes in 3:15, ***“I know your works: that you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth. 17 For you say, 'I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked...19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.”***

This church had lost its enthusiasm, zeal, and excitement for the work of the Lord. They were complacent, satisfied in thinking that their perceived accomplishments were pleasing to God. But they were wrong! Their attitude was totally unacceptable to the Lord. They made Him sick! Again, Jesus said to repent or suffer the



consequences.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE CHURCHES?

God says what He means, and He means what He says! He knows our works, our hearts, our minds, our motives, and the strength of our faith. He expects us to follow His commandments during the good times as well as the hard times. He is always aware of our circumstances and our needs. If we refuse to do His will, He will punish us. If we follow His Word, He will reward us. Therefore, because of God's great love for us, we should try our best to live as He wants and resist the temptations of the devil. Knowing that we were imperfect and would sin from time to time, God gave us a way to get back in His good graces. He sent His Son to die for our sins. Because of Jesus' sacrifice, when we mess up and sin, we can repent of that sin and ask God to forgive us. And He Will!!! Although the devil tries to trick us in any way he can, he is not in control. He never has been!

Revelation 1:8 says "***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"*** (NKJV) !!!The message of Revelation is quite clear to all of readers:

The Devil Loses.

JESUS WINS!!!



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