

Poised for Harvest, Braced for Backlash
Lesson 7

Exercise 1

A. Instructions

Listen carefully to the following passage and then discuss the questions that follow.

Revelation 21:1-5

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

⁵He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

B. Discussion Questions:

1. In the New Jerusalem, where is God going to dwell with men?
2. What is going to happen to death when God’s dwelling is with men on the earth?
3. Does this passage say that God is going to make only some things new, or that God will make everything new?

C. Lesson

Our hope as Christians is not to die so that our souls can float away to sit on a cloud forever in heaven. Our hope is to live in the kingdom of God on the earth in resurrected bodies. God is going to dwell with us on the earth. God will dwell on the earth with men.

Exercise 2:

A. Instructions

Listen to the following passage and then discuss the questions that follow:

Daniel 2:26-49

²⁶The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), “Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?”

²⁷Daniel replied, “No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, ²⁸but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you lay on your bed are these:

²⁹ “As you were lying there, O king, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. ³⁰ As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than other living men, but so that you, O king, may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

³¹ “You looked, O king, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. ³² The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, ³³ its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. ³⁴ While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. ³⁵ Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were broken to pieces at the same time and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

³⁶ “This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. ³⁷ You, O king, are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; ³⁸ in your hands he has placed mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

³⁹ “After you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. ⁴⁰ Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. ⁴¹ Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron mixed with clay. ⁴² As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. ⁴³ And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.

⁴⁴ “In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. ⁴⁵ This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands—a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces.

“The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy.”

⁴⁶ Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered that an offering and incense be presented to him. ⁴⁷ The king said to Daniel, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.”

⁴⁸ Then the king placed Daniel in a high position and lavished many gifts on him. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and placed him in charge of all its wise men. ⁴⁹ Moreover, at Daniel’s request the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego administrators over the province of Babylon, while Daniel himself remained at the royal court.

B. Discussion Questions

1. In this vision, what do the gold, silver, bronze, iron, and iron mixed with clay mean?
2. When the kingdom of God comes, what will happen to these other wicked kingdoms of men?
3. Daniel says that the rock cut out of the mountain is the kingdom of God. When this mountain grew, what did it fill?

C. Lesson

Daniel prophesied that at the end of this evil age, God is going to send His Messiah to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. This kingdom will destroy all other wicked kingdoms and governments. This kingdom will be established by God Himself through His chosen Messiah. When the Messiah establishes the kingdom of God on the earth, this kingdom will grow throughout the whole earth. Through this kingdom, the whole earth will be filled with the glory of God.

Jesus, John the Baptist, Paul, the other apostles, and the early church preached and taught was the good news of the “kingdom of God.” Jesus was Jewish, and most of the people he preached to were Jewish. When the Jewish people listened to Jesus talk about the kingdom of God, the picture of the kingdom of God in their mind came from passages like this one in Daniel. The Jewish people knew about the kingdom of God from the Old Testament.

The people of Israel hoped for the day when God would send the Messiah to remove all wicked kingdoms from the earth. They hoped for the day when God would send the Messiah to establish the kingdom of God on the earth. Their hope was to live in the kingdom of God under the Messiah’s leadership. God is coming to the earth to live with men. Jesus had the same hope as His Jewish brothers. The hope of Israel is the kingdom of God established on the earth. This kingdom will fill the whole earth. Jesus will be the king of this kingdom when He comes back.

The kingdom of God will be set up on the earth when Jesus comes back. This kingdom will grow and fill the whole earth with God’s glory. Until Jesus returns to set up his kingdom, we have to carry our cross through persecution. But when Jesus comes back, we will be raised from the dead and will be rulers in the kingdom of God. Though in the age to come we will probably be able to visit the heavens in our new bodies, the hope of the Bible is not the soul’s escape to a heavenly kingdom. The hope of the Bible is resurrected saints ruling with Jesus in the kingdom of God on the earth.

Exercise 3

A. Instructions

Listen to the following the story and then discuss the questions that follow.

Isaiah 62

62 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet,
till her righteousness shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.

² The nations will see your righteousness,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.

³ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

⁴ No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate.

But you will be called Hephzibah,
and your land Beulah;
for the LORD will take delight in you,
and your land will be married.

⁵ As a young man marries a maiden,
so will your sons marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.

⁶ I have posted watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
they will never be silent day or night.
You who call on the LORD,
give yourselves no rest,

⁷ and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem
and makes her the praise of the earth.

⁸ The LORD has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:
“Never again will I give your grain
as food for your enemies,
and never again will foreigners drink the new wine
for which you have toiled;

⁹ but those who harvest it will eat it
and praise the LORD,
and those who gather the grapes will drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary.”

¹⁰ Pass through, pass through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people.
Build up, build up the highway!
Remove the stones.

Raise a banner for the nations.

¹¹ The LORD has made proclamation
to the ends of the earth:

“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your Savior comes!
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.’ ”

¹² They will be called the Holy People,
the Redeemed of the LORD;
and you will be called Sought After,
the City No Longer Deserted.

B. Discussion Questions

1. When Jesus establishes His kingdom, what city will be the governmental center of that kingdom?
2. What does God say this city will be like?
3. Why does God tell us to cry out day and night for Jerusalem’s redemption and the salvation of the Jewish people?

4. Has God promised to restore Jerusalem?

C. Lesson

The government of Jesus' coming kingdom will be based in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be the most beautiful city the world has ever known. All of the nations will be amazed at the beauty and glory of Jerusalem. We must pray for Israel's salvation, because God is going to restore the whole world to its original glory from Jerusalem when Jesus comes back. Satan does not want this. That is why there is so much conflict over Jerusalem today, and why Satan has constantly tried to destroy the Jewish people throughout history.

Bible Memorization

A. Instructions

Repeat the following verses until they are memorized. As you memorize the first verse, remember that Jesus returns at the seventh trumpet.

Revelation 11:15

¹⁵ The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 21:3-5

³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

⁵ He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

Review of Core Content of Apostolic Preaching

A. Instructions

When the apostles preached the gospel in the New Testament, they preached the same kingdom of God that the Old Testament saints proclaimed. The only difference is that now they knew who the Messiah was: Jesus of Nazareth. When we read the Book of Acts, we see that the apostles' preaching had five main parts. Listen carefully as we recount these five points.

1. Jesus' beautiful life. The first part of the apostles' preaching focuses on the incomparable beauty of Jesus' life and ministry. It talks about how God showed the world that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus' life was full of incredible love, goodness, compassion, signs, wonders, and miracles. God used all of this to show the world that Jesus is the Messiah.

2. *Jesus' suffering on the cross*: The second part of the apostles' preaching focuses on the death of Jesus the Messiah on the cross. Jesus' death was a blood sacrifice of atonement for the forgiveness of sins. Before entering into the glory of his kingdom on the earth at the second coming, the Messiah had to come to Israel *first* as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. The blood of bulls and goats could not wash away our sins. Jesus' blood could. Through this sacrifice, repentance and the forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed to the world in Jesus' name as an offer of mercy before the Messiah's second coming. At the Second Coming, Jesus will execute judgment on the wicked.

3. *Jesus' Resurrection*: The third part of the apostles' preaching focuses on Jesus' resurrection. First, by raising Jesus from the dead, God showed the world that Jesus was righteous. Jesus had been innocent and unjustly condemned to death. By dying on "a tree," the cross, Jesus had carried a curse on himself. However, the resurrection showed that it was not his curse. It was *our* curse that he bore. Jesus' resurrection on the third day was a firstfruits sign that God would indeed fulfill promises in the Old Testament and resurrect the righteous at the end of the age. The resurrection was the final undeniable proof that Jesus was the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Death had entered the world through sin. Jesus had no sin, and so death could not hold him. He is the promised Messiah who would remove death from the earth.

4. *The Day of the Lord - The Second Coming, the Kingdom of God, the Coming Judgment, and the Restoration of All Things*: The fourth part of the apostles' preaching focuses on the Day of the Lord and the second coming of Jesus. When Jesus comes back, He will resurrect the righteous from the dead. He will establish the kingdom of God on the earth. He will give His people eternal rewards in His kingdom. The earth's capital will be in Jerusalem. Jesus will be the Father's appointed judge and military champion. When Jesus returns, He will carry out God's wrath against the wicked. He will trample on wicked rulers and cleansing the wicked from the earth. Eventually, the wicked will also be resurrected bodily from the dead and thrown into the lake of fire. All nations and kingdoms of the earth belong to the Lord. He is Lord of all. He is determined to fix the earth that he loves. At Messiah's appearing, the "restoration of all things" (Ac. 3:21) will begin.

5. *Repentance and Faith*: The fifth part of the apostles' preaching highlights how people can receive the forgiveness of sins. The forgiveness of sins is possible through Jesus' blood that he shed on the cross. To receive the forgiveness of sins in Jesus' blood we must repent of our sins and believe in Jesus as the resurrected Lord and Messiah. Those who repent and believe receive the Holy Spirit as a seal on their hearts. This seal is an assurance that they will take part in the resurrection of the righteous and be a part of the Messiah's kingdom.

Memorization of Key Principles

1. *In the age to come, God is going to dwell on the earth with men.*
2. *Our hope is in the resurrection of the dead, the restoration of all things, and the establishment of the kingdom of God on the earth.*
3. *The New Jerusalem will be the earth's capital in the coming kingdom of God.*
4. *Our hope was made possible by Jesus' death on the cross.*

5. *Our hope will be realized at the Second Coming of Jesus.*
6. *Miracles in the present age are signs that confirm the certainty of our future hope.*

Prayer Response

Break into groups and ask the Holy Spirit how He wants you to respond in prayer.