

Worship

Worship in the Book of Revelation

Lesson #13 for September 24, 2011

Scriptures: Revelation 1:13-18; Job 42:1-8; Revelation 19:1-5; Revelation 13; 14:6-12.

1. Despite common beliefs about the book of Revelation, there is a lot about worship in this book. Is it because of the great controversy theme where the Person to be worshiped is being challenged? It is in the book of Revelation (Revelation 12:7-12) that we first hear about the great controversy. Do you think about worship when you think about the book of Revelation?
2. Read Revelation 14:3. Why is this song exclusively for the 144,000? It is for those who have survived Revelation 13. Why can no one else learn it? Jesus has a name that no one else can learn. (Revelation 19:12) And so do we. (Revelation 2:17) Why all this mystery? Aren't we supposed to know even as also we are known? (1 Corinthians 13:12)
3. What does the book of Revelation reveal to us about God? We are told that He alone is Lord, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Judge, and the One who brings final judgment on the world. Does that make Him worthy of our praise and worship? (Revelation 14:7) Why?
4. Through the Hubble telescope, we have discovered that our universe is immensely larger than we previously had thought. There are literally billions of galaxies, each with up to billions of stars! Did God actually create each one of those individual bodies? What kind of being has the power to do that? Or, the time?
5. It has generally been believed that the creator of something must be greater and more powerful than what he creates. (Isaiah 40-55) Is that always true? Humans developed nuclear weapons. Humans made the Panama Canal and many other great construction projects. In what sense is the creator always greater than the created?
6. Read Revelation 1:13-18. At the end of this passage, John fell down like a dead man. What caused John to fall down at the feet of the Being? Notice specifically that God said, "Don't be afraid! I am the first and the last. I am the living one! I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I have authority over death and the world of the dead." (Revelation 1:17,18, *GNB*) Who was that? It could only be Jesus.
7. Compare Job's response at the end of his book. (Job 42:1-6) Job concluded by stating, "Now I have seen you with my own eyes. So I am ashamed of all I have said and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42:5,6, *GNB*) How do we explain what God said about Job in Job 42:7,8—that Job had said of God what was right? Does that refer only to the previous few verses? Or, to the whole book? In Job 1, why did God call Job "perfect" and "upright"? Can God correctly predict the future? Can God judge us fairly and correctly? He did for Job.
8. Under inspiration, Moses described himself as ". . . A humble man, more humble than anyone else on earth." (Numbers 12:3, *GNB*) How does that compare with the passages about John and Job? Is God humble? Was Jesus humble?
9. Do we need to be more humble in order to truly worship God? Couldn't God easily humble us? These men were apparently greatly humbled. Their reactions suggest fear, reverence, awe, and, perhaps, even repentance. Was that because of the realization of their own sinfulness? Their own unrighteousness? Even their own filth? Do we need to be humiliated?
10. This lesson talks about the apparently natural reaction of human beings when an angel or even God Himself appears to them. But, what about the verses that follow in which God repeatedly, in effect, said, "Get up. I want to talk to you." (Daniel 10:7-21; Ezekiel 1:27-2:2; Revelation 1:17,18; 22:10-17) How does this relate to the fruit of the Spirit which is supposed to produce "self-control"? (Galatians 5:22,23) Isn't the Spirit supposed to control us?

11. Why do those who see an angel or see God almost always prostrate themselves in the dust? Is that what God wants most? Does He want us to grovel? Which represents greater worship: 1) To fall on one's face before the Lord? or 2) To spend our time studying His character until we love and reverence Him, even worship Him?
12. When we worship God, does He expect us to have a similar reaction? Does an understanding of the life and death of Christ—especially His death on the cross—make you want to worship Him? Is it our only hope of salvation? Why?
13. There are many worship scenes depicted in the book of Revelation. Consider who those worshipers are/will be, where they are, and what they do, say, and sing. Several things are obvious: God protects them, they will never thirst or hunger again, and He gives them permission to stand around His throne and to follow Him wherever He goes.
14. Read Revelation 4. In heaven, how much time do you expect to spend worshiping God? How will we worship God when He is present right there with us? Does God want us to be bowing down with our faces on the ground? Or, relating to Him as a Friend? (2 Corinthians 5:17-21; John 15:15) Who does Jesus call His friends? Why?
15. Worship styles vary greatly here on this earth, even among Christian churches. Some people believe that when praying, one must always get down on his/her knees. Other people believe that we should raise our hands toward the sky. Are our Pentecostal friends showing greater worship because they exhibit more body movement when they worship?
16. Let us ask a more important question: Is it possible for us to worship God hourly, daily, weekly, from now throughout eternity? If we are worshiping God, is it impossible to get anything else done? Can we worship while we work? Is singing a valid part of worship?
17. If you look carefully through the book of Revelation, you will discover that there are many sanctuary scenes. Almost every one of the sanctuary scenes is connected with an example of worship. Does that make worship the dominant motif in the book of Revelation? Is worship an important part of the message of Revelation?
18. Is it important to be sure who we are worshiping? Could you worship something without really knowing anything about it? What does it mean to receive the mark of the beast on the forehead or the hand? (Revelation 13:16) Consider some of the passages in Revelation that talk about worship: Revelation 4:8-11; 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 11:15-19; 19:1-5. What reasons are given for worshiping the true God? Who else is trying to get us—by force—to worship him?
19. Among the many things that Revelation tells us is that there is a close relationship between heaven and earth. What happens here on this earth impacts what happens in heaven and vice versa. As the camera, in effect, swings from earth to heaven and back to earth, we get the idea that while there is rejoicing in heaven and terrible events are happening here on this earth, it will all come to a wonderful ending in Revelation 21 and 22.
20. During this quarter in which we have studied the subject of worship, whatever your struggles and whatever your trials, have you learned to take time for the Lord every day? Do you take time to be thankful? If you do, it will change your life.

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. *Great Controversy* 555.1

21. In Revelation 12:7-12, we are told how the great controversy began. Thousands of years later, that controversy is still going on; the “battlefield” is in our minds. Do we have a choice of whom we worship? Do we have a choice of not worshiping anyone? Or, must we worship

someone or something? Is it necessary to feel humble—to feel your own worthlessness and smallness—before you can praise and worship God? What things lead you to praise God?

22. Our Bible study guide suggests the final, end-time crisis will center on the question of worship. This is certainly suggested by Revelation 13 and 14. Do you agree with this analysis? What is the message of Revelation 13? In Revelation 13, the final campaign of Satan is described. He seems to be ultimately successful in our world. Through his representatives here on this earth, he will control the world to such an extent that no one will be able to buy or sell without his mark.
23. Thus, the worship described in Revelation 13 is all wrong! It is the worship of Satan. The first beast causes men to worship Satan. The second beast causes men to worship the first beast who will control our ability to buy and sell.
24. So, where are God's true people during this crisis? Where is the gospel during this time? Revelation 13:8 tells us that only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will survive. Who are they? This Lamb, of course, is the One who was once killed.
25. Through reading the Bible—and for us as Seventh-day Adventists, the spirit of prophecy as well—it is very clear that Satan was finally defeated at the cross. Doesn't Satan know that? So, what is he still fighting for? Is it that misery loves company? Why is Satan so determined to bring down as many people as possible with him?
26. Writer Annie Dillard asks the question, "Why do we people in churches seem like cheerful, brainless tourists on a packaged tour of the Absolute?" She goes on to observe, "On the whole I do not find Christians . . . sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT. . . . It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews."—*Teaching a Stone to Talk* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), p. 52. (Quoted in *Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 155)
27. Is there a danger that we have become too casual about our worship? Are we trying to bring God down to our level? Do we need a greater sense of awe in His presence? Obviously, we have no way of even comprehending a Being of such majesty and power. Shouldn't that produce more worship on our part?
28. Do all these references to worship in the book of Revelation impact the way we worship as a church? From the book of Revelation, it is patently clear that the former Lucifer, now Satan, the Devil, is determined to introduce a false form of worship that imitates the true worship as much as possible, but places him as the object of worship. How can we avoid being deceived by that false worship? (Matthew 24:24)
29. Read Revelation 14:1-5. This chapter starts with a view of the survivors who make it through Revelation 13. They are worshiping around the throne of God. Is this a picture of heavenly worship? Then, Revelation 14 turns to depict the final events in this earth's history.
30. Seventh-day Adventists have considered the three angels' messages as their own special portion of Scripture. What is the essence of each of those three messages?
31. In Revelation 14:9-12, we have the fiercest warning in all the Bible. It is a warning against worshiping the beast and his image instead of the true God. Does it make you want to worship God? The Sabbath is central in this.
32. So, is our worship genuine? Are we worshiping a correct picture of God? Do we have a

correct picture of God? How important is it to have the truth before we determine who to worship? Do we need to have all the answers in order to truly worship? So, what is the core question concerning worship in the book of Revelation? Is it primarily about how we worship? Or, about who we worship? And why we worship Him/him?

33. Read Revelation 22:8,9. After seeing and hearing all of the book of Revelation, John was awed and overwhelmed! He fell down to worship his guiding angel. But, the angel reminded him that the One we are to worship is God. Compare Revelation 19:10.
34. As humans, do we have an innate, built-in need to worship? How are we supposed to worship in our day? Does God want us to spend our time with our faces in the dirt? Of course not! What God wants is for us to become His friends (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; John 15:15, *GNB*) and to love Him and respect Him for all that He has done and will do for us, but mostly because of the kind of Person He is.
35. Worship is not primarily about what we do in church for a couple hours on Sabbath mornings. Worship is about our attitude and relationship to God seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It is about putting God first in everything we say, do, and think. Worship is also about how we treat others. (Micah 6:6-8) Worship is about loving others—even those who are unlovable. (Matthew 5:43,44) Worship is about denying self and proclaiming the gospel. All of these things are diametrically opposed to Satan’s ways.
36. We have so many things for which to be thankful and for which to worship God—creation, redemption, life, salvation, and forgiveness. So, which of these reasons is most important in your mind? The fact that God created us in the beginning? The fact that He left heaven to come and live and die for us? The fact that He was willing to “pay the penalty” for our sins? The fact that He created everything that exists?
37. Have you ever had the opportunity to discuss the question of worship with a person of the world who knows little about Scripture? Does it seem to him/her that God is a little egotistical and egocentric?
38. Do the messages in Revelation help you to worship God in a better way? Why? Or, why not? Do they help us to know God better? Would we understand the great controversy without the book of Revelation?
39. Having spent 13 weeks discussing worship, could you write out in a few words your own definition of *worship*? As quoted in the Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide for September 23, 2011, Richard M. Davidson of Andrews University described worship as “bending low before our Maker, recognizing and acknowledging His holiness and our creatureliness. It is submitting to His sovereignty, responding to His majestic presence.”
40. Read Psalm 2:11; Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29. Does knowing that God is a consuming fire make you want to have God as your Friend, and thus, to worship Him? Would He truly consume us instantly if it were not for the sacrifice of Christ? Is this why we need Christ to be constantly “pleading” our cases before the Father? Will it be safe to enter heaven with the Father there?
41. No one who enters heaven will believe that he has earned his way there. (GC 665)
42. When we enter heaven, will we truly be able to think of God—not only the Son, but also the Father, and the Holy Spirit—as our Friends?

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