

Monday Week 51 End Times Conflict

Bible Reading: Revelation 1:1-11

Q 201 What is the book of Revelation about?

A. The book of Revelation is about future things.

A boy was mowing the lawn. He was thinking about how great God is. “If God knows everything, He knows if I will be saved or lost. If He knows I will be lost, then I’m doomed.” That thought made the boy feel hopeless. But then another thought came into his mind. “What if I decide to trust God and follow Jesus? Wouldn’t that change what God knew? If I decide to ask Jesus into my heart, then God knew I would do that. I will decide to trust Jesus.” The boy went on mowing the yard, but his heart was lighter. He didn’t feel hopeless just because God knows the future.

The book of Revelation is about future things. Some of those things are scary. Some are very wonderful. If you trust God, He will keep you through hard times. He will also give you wonderful blessings. Your future is in His hands.

Thinking Deeper

Proponents of open theology deny that God knows what people will do in the future. He knows all possible decisions everyone can make and the consequences of those decisions, but He doesn’t know what way people will take. The book of Revelation poses a problem for open theology. It includes major events that are definitely going to happen, and it also includes prophecies of people and their decision about accepting or rejecting God. Revelation is about “things which must shortly come to pass.” Included in those things is that “the rest of the men which were not killed...repented not of the works of their hands.” Not one of them will repent. God knows the future of these people. Did God determine that they wouldn’t repent? No, because God “is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” So here God foreknows something that is not His will, yet He declares that it will happen. God doesn’t make it happen, yet He knows it will happen. God sees the future. He “inhabiteth eternity.”

Tuesday

Week 51

End Times Conflict

Bible Reading: Revelation 12:7-12

Q 202 What is the war that Revelation describes?

A. Revelation describes a war between Satan and God's people.

Ruth, from the country of Uzbekistan, told her teacher that there is only one God. The teacher told Ruth, "Quit telling fairy tales or I will take you to the principal and you will be expelled."

Eight students in Eritrea brought Bibles to a camp their school required them to attend. They talked about Jesus to other students. They were punished by being locked up in metal shipping containers.

In India, about 60 children were attending VBS when radical Hindus disrupted their meeting, tore up their Bibles and chased the children away.

These are examples* of how Satan is fighting a war against God's people. Satan hates God and God's people. Pray for those who are being persecuted. Pray that you will be a strong witness for Jesus. Don't let Satan defeat you. Trust in Jesus every day.

*from Kid's of Courage Archives on Voice of the Martyr's Web site.

Thinking Deeper

Nero was a ruthless Roman ruler who blamed Christians for the burning of Rome. He then had many of them killed in the arena. During the Communist rule of Russia, Christians were called "sick" members of society who should be destroyed so that they would not contaminate the rest of society. In contemporary western culture, Christians are often blamed for being the cause of most of the wars of history. Christians are branded as intolerant, ignorant people who are actually dangerous to the rest of progressive society. Christians who believe in Creation as an act of God, in marriage as between one man and one woman, and in the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death, are a hated minority.

Where does this visceral animosity against Christians come from? The truth is that there is a spiritual battle going on for the hearts and minds of men, and on the dark side of this battle is Satan himself. Jesus battled with Satan during his temptation in the wilderness, and we are also in a battle with him every day. Be encouraged because Jesus has overcome the wicked one by his victory on the cross. That victory is ours "by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony."

Wednesday Week 51 End Times Conflict

Bible Reading: Revelation 13:11-18

Q 203 What is the mark of the beast?

A. The mark of the beast is a mark that everyone must have to be able to buy or sell.

A truck driver decided to play a trick on his friend who was riding along with him. When they came to a toll plaza he said, "I'm tired of paying tolls. I'm not paying this one." He stepped on the pedal and drove right through the plaza without even slowing down. His friend thought they were in trouble. Finally the driver told him that he had a pre-paid pass. Inside his truck was a special radio that sent out a signal and paid automatically. To go through the plaza without stopping, you had to have the special radio.

Revelation says that a time will come when everyone will be required to have a special mark. It may allow buying or selling automatically. But it will be identified with a very wicked being who will demand that everyone has his mark. People without the mark will have a very hard time on earth. The anti-Christ will be very wicked.

Thinking Deeper

During the Nazi domination and occupation of most of Europe, Jewish people were required to wear an identifying mark. It was a prominent yellow star. They were singled out for "special treatment."

In the Soviet Union, a youth organization called the Young Pioneers educated youth to be good Communist citizens on the community level. They wore identifying red scarves.

Gang members in the inner city usually have identifying marks that allow them special privileges on their turf.

Coercive societies often have a very visible means to distinguish those who are accepted and those who are not. The ultimate coercive society is yet to come. A leader will arise who will have society organized from the top to the bottom. He will be a great community organizer. He will require all people to receive a visible mark, which the Bible calls the mark of the beast. This mark will be an open identification with the leader and his agenda. It will be a decision between Christ and the anti-Christ. That is a decision we must all make. Who will you choose?

Thursday Week 51 End Times Conflict

Bible Reading: Revelation 14: 9-12

Q 204 What will happen to those who receive the mark of the beast?

A. Those who take the mark of the beast will experience the wrath of God.

“If you’re going to be part of our club you have to prove that you are brave. That means you have to steal something and bring it to the next meeting.” Joey listened as the club leader gave instructions on how to become a member. Some really cool kids were in the club. He wanted to be part of them. But should he steal? “I can be tough,” thought Joey. At the next meeting Joey was there with the expensive radio he had stolen. He was going to be part of the group! Suddenly, the door burst open and in rushed several policemen. “We’re going to search everybody for stolen goods!” they said. Joey was found out. He had to go with the police and face what he had done. How he wished he hadn’t joined the gang.

People who take the mark of the beast will be able to buy and sell. They will be accepted by the powers of earth. But that is not the end. God will come and destroy the kingdom of the anti-Christ. Everyone who has the mark of the beast will suffer the wrath of God. Don’t ever side with evil. It is not worth it.

Thinking Deeper

After World War II officials from the now deposed Nazi regime appeared in court at the famous Nuremburg Trials. They were accused for crimes against humanity and war crimes. The world had been shocked by the discovery of the holocaust, where millions of Jews had been brutally slaughtered by the Nazis. What was the defense of those who were involved in these atrocities? “We were just obeying orders.” After all, resisting the powers over them could have been fatal. The world court at Nuremburg rejected the defense. Evil actions, even if they are ordered by higher authorities, are still evil. The war crime perpetrators were convicted and executed.

The ruling authorities will demand that people take the mark of the beast. It will be a requirement to show support of the World Order. However, that is not the ultimate authority. Anyone who takes the mark will be guilty of violating God’s commandments. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” Those who take the mark will have no defense. They will experience the wrath of God.

God always has the last word.

Friday Week 51 End Times Conflict

Review the Week's Questions

Q 201 What is the book of Revelation about?

A. The book of Revelation is about future things.

Q 202 What is the war that Revelation describes?

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Davy Crockett was an American hero. He was one of the freedom fighters at the Alamo, a fort in Texas. Colonel Travis was their leader. He called the men together and told them they could choose to stay and fight, or they could flee. They were greatly outnumbered. He drew his sword and made a line in the sand. "Cross the line if you choose to fight." Davy Crockett stepped across the line. So did many others. This small group of men fought bravely, but they were all killed. Later, in an important battle the Texas army thought about their bravery. They shouted, "Remember the Alamo!" They won and Texas became independent.

You are called to make a choice about which side you are on. You will either fight on God's side or on Satan's side. It is not a fight for the Alamo, but is either for good or for evil. You will be on one side or the other. You must decide. "Choose you this day whom you will serve."

Thinking Deeper

"Who is to say what is right and wrong?" That question marked many college debates on American campuses during the 1960s and 1970s. The student revolution of the sixties was mostly a revolution of ideas which rejected the Judeo-Christian heritage of America in favor of a more European existentialist view of things. Truth was out and "experience" was in. Each person decides what is true and what works for himself. There is no ultimate truth or morality. Tolerance of others, regardless of how deviant, became a mark of enlightenment. But that wasn't the only thing happening in the world. Islam was on the move, though most of us had no idea what was going on. And fundamentalist Muslims had no qualms about what was right or wrong. They were right and everyone else was wrong. Now the truth has come home to the West, but the West isn't prepared to fight. The West still doesn't know right from wrong, truth from falsehood. So many intellectuals endeavor to see a kind of moral equivalence among all the diverse beliefs of our day.

That will not last. There will be a clear line between God's people and those who follow the anti-Christ. Revelation is written partly to prepare us for the battles to come. Be ready.