

Study Guide for the Week of September 30, 2007

This study guide is designed to help you to become more familiar with the Bible. For 2007 the study guide will help you read through the New Testament in a year. Study these passages on your own, with a friend, or with a group. If you or someone you know needs a Bible, please take one from under a chair in the Worship Center. They are there for you to take home and use! Sermon manuscripts are available at www.spwired.com.

Monday, October 1. Our reading today begins with the worship in heaven that occurred with the downfall of the Roman Empire, who had destroyed and warred against God's people. Try to imagine the sounds captured in this vision. **Read Revelation 19:1-10.** Here the bride is the church, or the people of God. Later, John will shift metaphors and the New Jerusalem will be his bride. The marriage supper of the Lamb points to Psalm 23, "you prepare a table before me." "Hallelujah" means, in Hebrew, "Praise to Yahweh, or Praise to the Lord." Notice that the fitting response to God is praise. Take a moment to express praise to God...

Tuesday, October 2. Read Revelation 16:12-16. This passage sets the stage for the Battle of Armageddon (or Harmageddon). Remember that many see this battle as being symbolic of God's ultimate destruction of all that is evil on the earth, or even of the fall of Rome. **Read Revelation 19:11-21.** If the beast is defeated here, and the beast represents Rome in Revelation, then Armageddon represents the fall of Rome. If the beast also represents every evil empire, then Armageddon represents God's ultimate judgment against all evil empires and their inevitable destruction. Some are disturbed by the violence attributed to Jesus or to God in Revelation. But this language of the battlefield destruction of God's enemies makes more sense when you recall that less than 30 years earlier the Romans had killed 1,000,000 Jews in their invasion of Judea, marching through the plain at Armageddon on their way to Jerusalem.

Wednesday, October 3. In our reading today you will read about the "first resurrection." Some take this to mean the resurrection of all who belong to Christ. This might mean that John believed those who die in Christ would be raised immediately after death while the other dead remain in a state of sleep until the second resurrection. **Read Revelation 20:1-10.** Some people see this 1,000 year reign as literal, and as coming after the Second Coming of Christ. Others see it as representing the age we live in now, after Christianity began to spread and as Christ currently reigns in the hearts of his people on earth. In this view the church plays the role of holding back the work of evil in the world. Notice that Satan is released once more, at the end of the millennial reign, just prior to the Last Judgment. This seems to be a repeat of Armageddon. Gog and Magog represent evil individuals or nations. These terms are used in a variety of ways in ancient literature. In Ezekiel they represent a nation from the north and its prince.

Thursday, October 4. Read Revelation 20:11-15. These are the dead who were not raised in the first resurrection in yesterday's reading. They may be those who were not believers, though possibly might also include believers who were not killed for their faith. Revelation says that our names are written in the Book of Life from "the foundation of the world." Is John teach predestination or that ultimately our salvation is a gift from God, and that God knows, from the beginning of the world, who would choose him?

Friday, October 5. As you read today you are meant to see this (and tomorrow's reading) as the restoration of the paradise that was lost in the Garden of Eden when human beings first turned away from God. **Read Revelation 21:1-8.** In verse 6, when God says that he is the beginning and the end, the meaning of "end" is "ultimate goal." How is God the beginning and the end of life? How do these events make you feel? **Read Revelation 21:9-27.** What does John want us to know about heaven?

Saturday, October 6. Read Genesis 2:8-10 and 3:22-23. This is the backdrop for our reading today and tomorrow. **Read Revelation 22:1-5.** The Bible begins with paradise lost, and ends with paradise restored. What similarities do you see in the readings for today?

Sunday, October 7. Read Revelation 22:6-21. To have washed one's robes is to have received Christ as Savior. The washing itself is symbolized in baptism. Revelation gives us a vision to work for in this life. It compels us to work toward a world of justice and righteousness, and it gives us hope that sustains us. When we know how this book ends we can say, "Come, Lord Jesus." Think back on what you have learned in your study of Revelation. What is the most important life-lesson you draw from it?