

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN.

A.D. 95 or 96.] LESSON IX. [Nov. 28.

JOHN'S VISION OF CHRIST.

Rev. 1. 1-18. Commit vs. 4-6.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Rev. 1. 18.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

The once crucified Jesus is now the glorious, all-powerful, conquering King of kings.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Rev. 1. 1-20. Tu. Rev. 2. 1-29. W. Rev. 3. 1-22. Th. Matt. 24. 14-42. F. Dan. 7. 1-14. Sa. Isa. 6. 1-13. Su. Rev. 19. 1-16.

TIME.—The Book of Revelation was written probably A. D. 95 or 96.

PLACE.—The island of Patmos, in the Egean Sea, a small, rocky island, 6 or 8 miles long, by 1 broad.

AUTHOR.—St. John the apostle.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION is a prophetic book to comfort the churches in their weakness and persecutions, with the assurance that Jesus was alive, guiding all events, and would triumph in the end, bringing complete redemption to the world.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—Seven churches—Named in ver. 11, but also typical of the whole Church. Asia—The proconsular province, called Asia, in Western Asia Minor. Which is, etc.—The eternal Father. The seven spirits, the Holy Spirit—Called seven as the perfect, and representing his manifold ways of working. 5. First begotten of the dead—First to rise from the dead, and have a resurrection body. 6. Kings—Or a kingdom, all Christians together forming a kingdom; each one being also a king. Priests—To teach, to sacrifice for, to lead to God. 7. Cometh with clouds—Of attendants, or symbols of majesty. Kindreds of the earth—The worldly, in opposition to his kingdom. 8. Alpha and Omega—The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. He exists from eternity to eternity. 9. Was in Patmos—Banished there by Domitian. 10. In the spirit—In a devotional, exalted ecstatic state of mind. 11. Smyrna, etc.—Cities of Asia, not far from Ephesus. 12. Candlesticks—Lampstands, the churches who hold up before the world the light of Jesus. 13. Clothed—In royal raiment. 14. Hairs white—Typical of wisdom and experience. 15. Feet like brass—To tread down all opposition. 16. Seven stars—The angels, ver. 20; the ministers of the churches. 17. Two-edged sword—His Word. 18. He that liveth—The living one, the eternal, God. 19. And was dead—Became man, and died as man dies.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The Book of Revelation.—The seven churches.—The description of the Trinity.—Christians as kings and priests.—Patmos.—Golden candlesticks.—The seven stars.—The description of Jesus.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—Who wrote the Book of Revelation? When? Where? What was its purpose? Who revealed it to John? (v. 1.)

SUBJECT: THE DIVINE JESUS, THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

I. THE TRIUNE GOD (vs. 4, 5).—To whom did John write? Name these seven churches. (v. 11.) Where are these churches? Was the revelation for them alone? What two things did he ask for the churches? From whom? How is the Father described? The Holy Spirit? Why is he spoken of as the seven spirits? Who is the third person mentioned? Prove from this lesson that he is divine.

II. THE WORK OF JESUS (vs. 5-8).—How many descriptive titles are given to Jesus in these verses? How is he the first begotten from the dead? How is he the prince of the kings of the earth? Meaning of "Alpha and Omega?" How many things has he done for us, mentioned in these verses? How will he come? What is meant by his coming? (Dan. 7. 13, 14; Isa. 60 15-22; Rev. 21. 1-8.) What cometh to the Church in this promise?

III. THE VOICE OF JESUS (vs. 9-11).—What troubles were upon the churches at this time? In what three things was John their companion? What is it to be in the Spirit? What day was called the Lord's day? What did John hear? What did it say?

IV. THE VISION OF JESUS (vs. 12-18).—What is represented by the candlesticks? (v. 20; Matt. 5. 14.) Who appeared among them? What does that represent? Describe the vision of Jesus. What is symbolized by his white hair? (Rom. 11. 33, 34.) By his flaming eyes? (Prov. 15. 3; Heb. 4. 13.) By his feet of burnished brass? (Dan. 4. 35.) By his voice? By the two-edged sword (Heb. 4. 12) What does all this teach us about Jesus, the captain of our salvation? Why does he again declare his divinity? Meaning of v. 18?

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. God is presented to us as the triune God, that we may have some understanding of his varied nature and relations to us.
2. Jesus Christ is (1) the witness of God's message to us; (2) the proof that there is resurrection and life for us; (3) the ruler of all earthly forces and powers; (4) our loving friend; (5) our redeemer from sin into the greatest glory.
3. He has made Christians to be kings over all earthly powers; over evil; over heavenly influences, that they may use them for the good of men.
4. Christians are priests, to teach men, to make sacrifices for their good, to pray for them, and lead them to God.
5. With a Saviour like ours, victory is certain in the end, the redemption of the whole world.
6. Christians are light-bearers for Christ, to cause his life and teachings to shine over all the world.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. Who wrote the Book of Revelation? ANS. The apostle John, in the Isle of Patmos, about 96 years after Christ.
2. What was the object? ANS. To assure the churches that Jesus is alive, and divine, and among them, and will surely come in his kingdom.
3. What vision was shown to John? ANS. He saw the same Jesus who had loved us and died for us, now in his glory, prepared to triumph over all evil.

A.D. 96.] LESSON X. [Dec. 5.

Rev. 5. 1-14. Commit vs. 11-13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—Rev. 5. 13.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

Every one should join with the angels and the whole creation in worship and praise of him who has redeemed us by his blood, and made us kings and priests unto God.

DAILY READINGS.

M. Rev. 4. 1-11. Tu. Rev. 5. 1-14. W. Rev. 6. 1-17. Th. Ezek. 1. 4-28. F. Philip. 2. 1-11. Sa. 2 Cor. 5. 1-19. Su. Eph. 3. 1-21.

TIME, etc.—See last lesson.

INTRODUCTION.—Following our last lesson are two chapters containing the messages of warning and encouragement to the churches. Then, with chapter 4 begins the series of visions; chaps. 4 and 5 are introductory pictures of the glory of the heavenly guardians of the Church, and of their watchful care over her destiny.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.—And I saw—See the vision in chap. 4, of which this is a continuation. A book—In the form of a roll; containing the future history of God's people, unfolded in the Revelation. 2. To open the book—To reveal what was written therein, and to bring it to pass, to guide the Church in its conflict to the triumphant end. 4. No man—No human being or angel could know or guide the future. It would take divine wisdom and power. 5. Lion—Typifying courage, strength, victory. Of the tribe of Judah—From whom Jesus sprang. Root of David—Shoot from the stock of David. 6. In the midst of the throne, etc., i.e. between the throne and the living creatures. Four beasts—Living creatures, described in chap. 4. They typify either creation or Providence, or, more probably, the great body of Christians, who have the qualities represented by these living creatures. Elders—Representatives of the churches, leaders. They were 24, as many as the patriarchs for the Old Testament Church, and the apostles for the New, taken together. A Lamb—Signifying Christ, as the atoning sacrifice. Seven horns—Types of power, seven signifying that the power was omnipotent. Seven spirits—The Holy Spirit in his manifold works, sent by Jesus.

8. Golden vials—Bowls or censers. Oils—Incense, type of prayer, only fragrant to God when, like incense, it is burning in the love of the heart. 10. And we shall reign—Or do reign, as in Rev. Ver. Their principles are beginning to rule on earth, and shall yet entirely prevail.

SUBJECTS FOR SPECIAL REPORTS.—The vision of the opened heaven (chap. 4).—The sealed book.—The Lion of the tribe of Judah.—The four living creatures.—The representation of Jesus in vs. 5 and 6.—The golden vials.—The new song.—The chorus.

QUESTIONS.

INTRODUCTORY.—What is the subject of the two chapters following our last lesson? In what chapter did the visions of St. John begin? Where is the scene of to-day's lesson laid? (Chap. 4. 1.)

SUBJECT: WORSHIPING GOD AND THE LAMB.

I. A SONNE IN HEAVEN (vs. 1-4).—What had John seen in heaven? (chap. 4.) What was in the hand of him that sat on the throne? What was the form of this book? How was it sealed? What did it represent? What is meant by opening the book? What proclamation was made? Why did John weep?

II. THE ONE TO BE WORSHIPED (vs. 5-7).—Who came forward to open the book? Why was he worthy? Why is he called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah?" Why "the Root of David?" Why a Lamb? Where was he? What did he do? What is represented by the seven horns? By the seven spirits? What idea of Christ do you obtain from this picture?

III. THE WORSHIPERS (8, 11, 13).—What three classes joined in the worship? What was the form of the four living creatures? (4, 7, 8. Ezek. 1.) Who are represented by them? By the twenty-four elders? How many angels joined in the new song? (v. 11.) Why? (Luke 15. 7, 10.) Who else joined in the song? (v. 13.) How does creation praise God? What was the difference between their song and that of the redeemed ones?

IV. THE WORSHIP (vs. 8, 9, 10, 12, 14).—What instrument of music did the elders have? For what purpose? What were the golden vials? What reverential position did the elders take? Why? What was the new song? Who can sing it? What would seem to be the number of the redeemed? What had Jesus done for them? What did they wish for him? (v. 12.) Who took part in a responsive service? When is singing well pleasing to God? (Eph. 5. 19, 20.) What do you learn from this scene about true worship.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. Heaven has great interest in what takes place on earth.
2. It is a great comfort to know that God knows and controls the future.
3. The four living creatures show the qualities that should be in all Christians: patient toil, wise intelligence, kingly power, far-sighted and swift-winged obedience.
4. Prayer like incense is sweet to God when it comes warm from the heart.
5. New mercies demand new songs of praise.
6. All the universe joins in praising God.
7. Worship, as here seen, is from the heart, consists of prayer and praise, is joined in by many, is responsive, is in reverential forms, expresses grateful love, is pleasing to God.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

4. What did John see in heaven? ANS. The sealed book of the future.
5. Who alone could open it? ANS. Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.
6. Who joined in his praise? ANS. The redeemed, the angels, and all created things.
7. What was their song? ANS. (Repeat the Golden Text)

A MINISTER in a country church in Scotland stepped in the course of his sermon, one day, and thus addressed a member who was somewhat deaf: "Are ye he-aring, John?" "Oh, yer air," was John's prompt reply; "I am he-aring, but to very little purpose." A great many folks, young and old might as well be deaf as to attend church and yet not hear the Word. Those whose hearing is defective are not the only ones who hear to very little purpose.

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