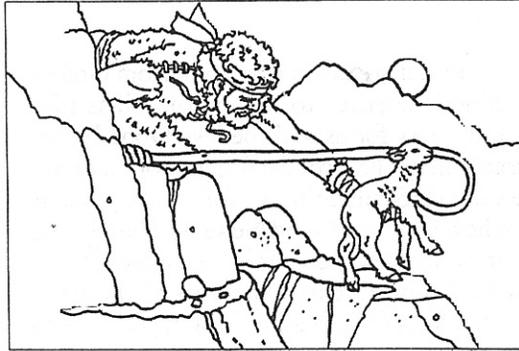


Glad Tidings... from Jesus with Love



6
**“In Christ”—
 Why the Good News Is Better Than You Think**

The Book of Revelation focuses like a spotlight on what happens in the last days. It shines brightest in chapter 14 where we see three special angels flying in the midst of heaven, who proclaim “the everlasting gospel . . . to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” (verse 6). “Every kindred” means every family, and “gospel” means Good News.

But How Good is the Good News?

If it’s not very good, it can’t be the pure, true gospel of Jesus.

We can be sure that Christ’s enemy, “that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation 12:9) will try to take out the “good” part so that it ends up as either bad news or as a confusing formula. Is it good advice, or Good News? There is a war behind all wars on earth—the great war between Christ and Satan. Revelation 12 describes it. All through the ages Satan has tried to defeat Him either by perverting His gospel or destroying His people. Now, in these very last days, Satan “knoweth that he hath but a short time” (verse 12). He tries harder to keep the Good News away from the world because he knows “the gospel of Christ . . . is the power of God [dynamite, in the original language!] unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

The news is so good that it would take us from now until the end of the world to learn it all. All we can do in this lesson is to shine the spotlight briefly on a few high points. So now, welcome to spending the rest of your life (and eternity!) in its excit-

ing, joyous discovery. You’ll never again be bored. Worldly novels, movies, sports, materialism, so-called thrills and amusements, will all become stale in comparison. Each day will be an adventure as you find fresh insights into why the Good News is so good—you are a student in the Holy Spirit’s classroom.

Learning Truths That We Have Never Understood Clearly

1. *What is the heart of the gospel of Christ? John 3:16-18.*

ANSWER: “God _____ the world that He _____, that whosoever _____ should . . . have _____ life.” “God sent not His Son into the world to _____ the world but that _____ through Him might be _____.” “He that _____ is condemned.”

Astounding as it may seem, the Good News is that (a) God requires only one thing from us—to “believe.” And (b) He came to save, not condemn, “the world,” and (c) the only way anyone can be lost is through his own unbelief of this News. But what is that unbelief? Could that be our problem?

2. *Describe this fatal “unbelief.” John 3:18-21; Hebrews 3:12, 15, 18, 19.*

ANSWER: It’s loving “_____ rather than light. . . . Everyone that doeth _____ hateth the light. . . . he that doeth _____ cometh to the light.” “An evil heart of unbelief” _____ “from the living God.” Instead of softening the heart, unbelief _____ the heart.

3. *How does an unbelieving (hard) heart become a believing heart? John 3:14, 15; 12:32, 33.*

ANSWER: When Christ is “_____” on His cross, He “will draw _____ [and women] unto”

Himself. He who responds to this drawing
 “_____ in Him, . . . [and will] have
 _____ life.”

The Good News is astounding! (a) Christ came to save the world (that includes you); (b) the cross draws “all” (that also includes you); (c) Christ will not force you—you can choose to resist His drawing; but (d) if you do not resist, you will be drawn to eternal life. “He that believeth not” is the one who resists. “In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul. . . . The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins.” *Happiness Digest*, p. 11.

The Love of Christ Is So Strong, We Must Resist In Order to Be Lost

4. *If we permit the Holy Spirit to hold us by the hand, can we continue doing the evil things our sinful nature prompts us to do? Galatians 5:16-18.*

ANSWER: “Walk in [with] the Spirit, and ye shall _____ fulfil the _____ The Spirit [strives] _____ the flesh, . . . so that ye _____ do the [evil] things that ye would.”

Christ has sent the Holy Spirit, His vicar or representative, to sit down beside you and never leave you (John 14:16-18). The gospel again is great Good News! The light is stronger than darkness; Christ’s love is stronger than hatred; His grace is stronger than sin; He is stronger than Satan; and (get this!) the Holy Spirit is stronger than “the flesh.” The “but” in verse 18 (in the Greek) means “furthermore, moreover.” To be “led of the Spirit” is deliverance from a self-centered motivation “under the law.”

5. *Is it easy or hard for us to believe Good News? How was it in Jesus’ day? Matthew 13:58; 17:20; Mark 6:6.*

ANSWER: “He did not many works there because _____.” His disciples even failed to cast out a demon “because of _____.” In His home town, Jesus “ marvelled because _____.”

Face it—we’re all born in a state of alienation from God so that our “sinful mind is hostile” to Him (Colossians 1:21; Romans 8:7, NIV). It’s easy for us to disbelieve Good News. Unbelief kept Israel out of the Promised Land for an entire generation. The only difficult thing in following Jesus is learning to believe how good the Good News is. The battle is not about works or even obedience—it is “the good fight of faith” (1 Timothy 6:12). Once we have the faith, all the devils in hell cannot stop the faith from bearing fruit in good works (Galatians 5:6, 22).

6. *Is it hard to become converted? John 3:2-6; 1:12.*

ANSWER: We are “born _____.” “As many as _____ Him, to them gave He power to _____.”

Conversion is not something we do. We don’t “born” ourselves. Our parents brought us into the world without our cooperation, and the Holy Spirit is the initiator of our new birth. If we “receive” Christ, He will cause this miracle to take place. “Receive” is another word for “believe.”

Worried About God Accepting You? Here’s the Good News.

7. *For how many people did Christ die? How many does He want to save? 1 Timothy 4:10; 2:3-6.*

ANSWER: He “is the Saviour of _____.” “Our Saviour . . . will have _____ to be saved. . . . [He] gave Himself a _____ for _____.”

This does not mean that all will be saved, eternally, for some can resist and reject, and many will disbelieve. But all

could be saved if they would. Christ is already the "Saviour of all men," "the Saviour of the world" (see John 4:42). But how can this be true?

8. *When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, how many people sinned "in him"? 1 Corinthians 15:22, 45; Romans 5:12.*

ANSWER: "In Adam _____." "Death passed upon _____."

Adam was the human race. When he fell, the human race fell "in him." In the Bible, the name "Adam" means everyone. The Bible reckons the entire human race as "in Adam." An illustration: we can read how Levi was "in" his great-grandfather Abraham long before he was born (Hebrews 7:9, 10).

9. *When Christ became the "last Adam" and died for the human race, how many people were redeemed and justified "in Him"? Romans 5:18. See Hebrews 2:9.*

ANSWER: "As by the offence of one [Adam] _____ came upon all men to _____; even so by the righteousness of one [Christ] the _____ came upon _____ unto _____ of life." Christ was to "_____ death for every man."

The "death" that Christ "tasted" for us all was not what we call death—which the Bible calls merely a "sleep." It was the "second death," the final punishment for sin (see Revelation 2:11; 20:14). There is no need for any human being to die that "second death" except that he rebels and refuses to let Christ's death be that punishment.

10. *How can this be true? Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 2:2.*

ANSWER: God "hath laid upon [Christ] the iniquity of _____." "God was in Christ _____ unto _____"

Himself, not _____ their trespasses unto _____." "He is the propitiation [sacrifice] . . . for the sins of _____."

11. *What is the "gift" which "the grace of God" has brought to "all men"? Romans 5:15, 16.*

ANSWER: "The free gift" "by grace" has "abounded unto _____ . And . . . the "free _____ is of _____ offences unto _____."

The original language says "the many," meaning the same "all" who in verse 15 "be dead." Christ gave His blood and paid the penalty of everyone's sin. God accepts the entire human race "in Christ" in the same way that the entire human race was condemned "in Adam." Christ is now the new Head of the human race! He has already died your "second death." God has accepted you "in Him;" stop worrying about whether He accepts you as His child. You are accepted "in Him." Hold your head high, "in Him."

That Nameless Deep Fear Is Taken Away

12. *What burden of deep psychic fear is lifted from your heart as soon as you understand and believe this Good News? Hebrews 2:14, 15.*

ANSWER: Christ died for us that He might "_____ who through fear of _____ were all their lifetime subject to _____."

The ultimate fear of all fears is the fear of the "second death," the appalling prospect of final darkness and condemnation. It is too deep for words. It poisons our peace and happiness. We may try to forget it, but it is ineradicable, for as the Bible says, we stand on its threshold "all [our] lifetime." The Good News is that Christ has lifted that "condemnation" from all of us, and has restored to us peace.

13. *What has Christ given "for the world," for everyone? John 6:33, 51, 53.*

ANSWER: He "gives life _____
 _____, . . . for the _____ of the world. . . .

Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have _____."

If Christ had not died for the world, the world would have died (2 Corinthians 5:14). Paul told the pagans at Athens that "in [Christ] we live, and move, and have our being"—all of us (Acts 17:28). We have literally been saved from the grave, "as those that are alive from the dead" (see Romans 6:13). Whether or not we believe, we are already in debt to the Son of God for every breath we have ever drawn. Even our daily food is the purchase of His sacrifice.

Isn't it time we should say "Thank You!" to Him?

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 That were a tribute far too small.
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my heart, my life, my all!"

—Isaac Watts

14. *What familiar illustration helps us understand what Christ accomplished for "all men" on His cross?*

On January 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation which legally freed every slave in the Confederate Territories. Thus, on His cross, Christ legally bore the punishment of every person's sin and emancipated him from its penalty. But no slave in Civil War days experienced freedom, until (a) he heard the good news, and (b) believed it. And so, we must (a) hear the Good News of what Christ accomplished on His cross, and (b) believe it. Then we experience deliverance.

15. *Do you choose to "stand fast" in your liberty "in Christ"?*
Galatians 5:1? _____



"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." 1 Peter 5:7

"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thessalonians 5:17