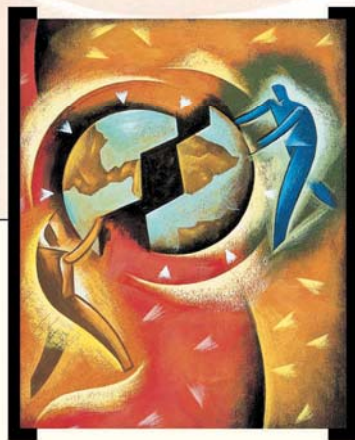


[A Devotional Study on Genuine Faith
from the Sermon on the Mount]

LORD,
I'm Torn
Between
Two Masters



KAY ARTHUR

LORD,
I'M TORN
BETWEEN TWO
MASTERS

A DEVOTIONAL STUDY *on* GENUINE FAITH

from the SERMON ON THE MOUNT

K A Y
A R T H U R



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INTRODUCTION

I've often knelt and prayed with others on the Mount of Beatitudes, gazing with tear-filled eyes at the brilliance of the Sea of Galilee shimmering in the wind and reflecting the noonday sun as it cast its diamonds on the surface of the waters. My prayer was for a faithfulness—a manifestation of God's righteousness, a faith that would set me apart from mere religion, the externals of worship. A faith that would not compromise in the quest for acceptance, nor flinch in the face of adversity, nor weaken in the desire for earthly treasures rather than eternal ones. A faith that would not be anxious or judgmental, but one that would bear fruit—fruit that would testify of the goodness of Vine-Keeper. A faith built on a rock rather than sand, and that would hold firm in the time of a storm's testing. A faith that would be true to my only Master and Lord.

And that, Beloved, is what I want for you as well as for me. How I would love to have you there with me on that windswept mount—listening to the sermon delivered by our Lord and captured in God's Word. Maybe someday that will happen; perhaps you will tour Israel someday with Precept Ministries International. But until then...I can still take you on a devotional study of our Lord's piercing sermon delivered to those who were following Him.

This is a study that will beckon you up that hillside daily. Yet within a few days, or maybe weeks, you may weary of the climb. You may want to throw this book down and say, "It's impossible." That's the way it is sometimes, when books get under our skin and prod us in ways we don't want to be prodded. We feel like tossing them rather than dealing with the issues they present.

But if you stick with me, my friend, and diligently seek the Lord through this study, I will make a pledge to you.

I believe with all my heart that you will find the grip of this old world of ours—with all its treasures, promises, problems, and pains—begin to

lessen its hold on you. As you dig into our Lord's Sermon on the Mount and cry out to His Holy Spirit for illumination, you will find a new freedom to entwine your thoughts, hopes, dreams, and desires around heavenly things. Eternal things. Values of genuine faith.

You will find yourself choosing to serve the King of kings with all your heart, mind, soul, body...and strength. And, oh, how you are needed at His side! Your life will become an encouragement, a provocation, and a living example to others struggling with the grip of this world. In you they will see what it means to be a true bondservant of our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you've done much hiking, you know that some trails start out level and gradually get steeper. Others start right off with an uphill climb! The first few weeks of this study are like that second trail. The climb is a little steep at times...but wait until you get to that lookout point where you can see the view! You will gain the context and perspective for the life-changing chapters that follow. And just as in my companion study, *Lord, Only You Can Change Me*, life change is what this book is all about.

As this study progresses, the lessons get gutsy and practical—they hit us where we live! But that's good. Because the more you learn, listen, and obey, the more you will find yourself freed—strand by strand—from that which ties you to this world and keeps you from being holy as He is holy.

How glorious that freedom is! What an inner sense of well-being it produces. And what a confidence will be yours in your relationship with your heavenly Father.

You need not be torn between two masters, Beloved. You can choose the narrow path that climbs toward glory. You can choose to seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Then, when the kingdom of heaven finally comes to earth, you will see that it was worth every sacrifice. No matter what the cost, no matter what the price, it was worth it all! For He has told us, "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12).

If there's a possibility of your using this as a group study in which you

would be a facilitator, then read “Guidelines for Group Use” in the “Study Resources” section at the back of this book, where you’ll find other valuable tools to enhance this study.

For many, the blessing of this study has been enhanced by the companion video and audio teaching tapes. For more information on these, simply call Precept Ministries International at our toll-free number (1-800-763-8280) and let one of our staff members help you. It would be their pleasure. We also provide training if you would like to develop your skills in handling the Word of God more accurately or in leading others in group studies designed to minister to people of all ages at any level of commitment while respecting the restraints on their time. We’re known as “The Inductive Study People: everybody, everywhere, any time, any place, any language, any age. One message: the Bible. One method: inductive.” Please don’t hesitate to call us.

Finally, let me share my vision—it’s the possibility of a new avenue of ministry for you, Beloved of God...

*A new beginning—
An avenue of ministry—
A sense of doing something that has eternal value*

These are three things I think are so important for you and for me. There’s so much to learn, to know, to experience, to do—and we never want to lose sight of that. To do so would be to miss what God has for us. To fall short of the tremendous potential of our lives—a potential that is ours because we are His, because we are children of the Creator of the Universe, indwelt by His divine Spirit and given the mind of Christ. You and I, Beloved, are God’s workmanship gifted by the Spirit of God and created in Christ Jesus unto good works that would absolutely stagger our minds if we were to see them before they ever happened.

And what has God put into your hands? What are you holding and reading right now? Is it an accident? A coincidence? No! You are holding a

devotional study that first and foremost will be the beginning of a new depth of understanding about strengthening your genuine faith in the face of life's priorities.

God is going to speak to you because through this book you are going to come face to face with the living Word of God—the Word that not only discerns the thoughts and intentions of your heart, but becomes the means of throwing His light on the direction your life is taking so you can know with absolute confidence where you are headed. If you listen to what He says—and by that I mean ordering your life accordingly—then there is, in a sense, a new beginning...of understanding, of purpose. A new level of Christlikeness is attained. You will be, as Paul would say, pressing on and attaining that for which Jesus Christ laid hold of you.

Which brings me to my next point—an avenue of ministry. What you have learned, God intends for you to share. I have a vision, and you, Beloved, are part of that vision. Our Lord's commission in Matthew 28 was that we make disciples of all men—that we teach them to observe all that He has commanded us. Acts 1 tells us that when we are saved and receive the Holy Spirit we become His witnesses—yet the question is often, “How?”

Here is the how. This “Lord” book contains truths every human being needs to know and to apply to his or her life. These are precepts for life; through them we will gain understanding and, as the psalmist says, “hate every false way.” We hate it because it is false rather than true, and it is truth that sets us apart, sets us free.

So what is my vision for you, my friend? It is that you go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to direct you to at least one other person—but preferably at least ten—and that you, along with them, study this book together. You may not be a teacher, but you can be the group's facilitator. You can take the questions you'll find at the end of each chapter and use them to stimulate a discussion among those whom the Lord has brought together in answer to your prayer. These are those who will be part of your crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. As you

watch them learn and grow in the knowledge of God and of His Word, you will experience the humbling joy of knowing that you have been used of God. That what you have done has eternal value. That your life and God-given gifts have not been wasted. That your work will live on—that the grace of God poured out on you was not poured out in vain, for you have labored in the strength of His grace.

So as you facilitate a group using this book, you need to watch for and encourage others in your group to do as you have done—to take what they have learned and impart it to another as you did with them. Think of the multiplication that will happen! Do you realize, Beloved, that this is the way we can reach our neighborhoods, our communities, our nation, and beyond? Think of the transformation that will take place among all those people today who are so interested in “the spiritual” but won’t step inside a church. Think—just think!—what is going to happen!

The time is now. The hour is short. Stop and pray right now and ask God what He would have you to do. He will show you, because He is God and because such prayers are in accordance with His will. As you step out and begin, just know that if you will step out in faith, God will give you an avenue of ministry, person by person or group by group, that will not only stagger your mind but absolutely delight your soul.

I cannot wait to hear what God does in and through you, my friend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kay". The signature is written in black ink and features a large, sweeping loop at the beginning and a smaller loop at the end.

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

— D A Y O N E —

Caron signaled Ted as she pulled out of the drive, happily letting her fingers spell out their silent code of love.

Ted signaled back, “I love you.”

Watching until Caron’s car was out of sight, Ted shut the front door and smiled. It hadn’t been easy, but he and Caron had nothing to be ashamed of in their courtship...nothing to diminish the delight and discovery of their wedding night. From the time they began dating, they had determined to be obedient to God. They had kept themselves pure.

It was Sunday evening, and their pastor’s message from Revelation 19—“The Bride of Christ”—had dominated their discussion as they wrapped gifts for the bridesmaids and groomsmen. Their conversation had been filled with dreams and visions... How could their marriage reflect their love of the Lord? How could their union demonstrate their commitment to His kingdom, their desire to be clothed in linen, bright and clean—woven by “the righteous acts of the saints”?

It had been such a wonderful evening, warmed with love, shared dreams, and anticipation.

It was also the last evening they would spend together on earth.

Just minutes after leaving her fiancé’s house, Caron suddenly found

herself face to face with her heavenly Bridegroom. Yards from her own driveway, her car was broadsided by a speeding drunk driver, and she was instantly killed.

Just think of stepping on shore and finding it heaven,
of touching a hand and finding it God's,
of breathing new air and finding it celestial,
of waking up in glory and finding it home!¹

Instead of a wedding, there was a funeral.

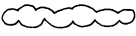
It was unexpected by everyone—except a sovereign, loving God. Because of the way they had lived and loved, they could stand before that God without shame...Caron in heaven, Ted on earth. Ted had neither tarnished nor violated the one who had been purchased by the death, burial, and resurrection of their Lord Jesus Christ. As Ted looked down on his beloved in her coffin, dressed in her white bridal gown, he caught the fragrance from the bridal bouquet. If she had lived, Caron would have carried it down the aisle. Now, it adorned her casket.

Through it all, however, Ted never questioned the sovereign God whom He loved and trusted. No, he didn't understand His Lord's reasons for taking Caron home at that particular time, in that particular way. He might never understand those reasons. But he determined to cling in faith's obedience to all he knew about God. The kingdom of heaven was their possession. Caron was home now. Someday he would see her again...face to face.

Have you ever wondered, my friend, what the kingdom of heaven is all about?

When tragedy falls out of a clear blue sky, when life presses in, when circumstances seem confused or painful, have you ever found yourself wondering what this heavenly kingdom is all about? To whom does it belong? When will it arrive? What does it look like? Is it something for the next life only, or can it be experienced today?

If you have pondered these things, you are wise. Death in our world is as certain as life, and just as we prepare ourselves to live, so we must prepare ourselves to die. Scripture says, “it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). The one who masters you in life will be your master in death. Therefore as we begin—or perhaps continue—our study of the Sermon on the Mount, let’s launch our journey with a look at what we can learn about the kingdom of heaven.

Since the Sermon on the Mount is only three chapters long, take a few minutes to read it through. You will find it printed out on pages 261 to 268. As you read, mark each occurrence of the word *kingdom* or the phrase *kingdom of heaven* in a special color or special way.* You might simply want to highlight it in blue and draw a little cloud around it like this:  If you already did this exercise in our initial study of the Sermon on the Mount, *Lord, Only You Can Change Me*, you will find it profitable to do again. The more you read the Sermon on the Mount, especially aloud, and the more you mark and study the text, the more it will become a part of you. And if it truly becomes a part of you, Beloved, you will not be ashamed when you see your Lord and Savior face to face.

When you finish marking every occurrence of the words *kingdom* or *kingdom of heaven*, list below what you learn about the kingdom of heaven. Note the chapter and verse where you found the reference. Don’t add anything to what the text says...the text is all we want at this point.

INSIGHTS ON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
FROM THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

* See page 273 for section on marking your Bible.

Now...a little food for thought as we call it a day. According to what you have learned from marking these references to the kingdom of heaven, what would be *your* status if you, like Caron, were suddenly taken in death? Where would you find yourself when your spirit left your body?

If you were to find yourself in heaven, according to Matthew 5:19 would you be called “great” or “least” in the kingdom?

What is the basis of your answer?

Would you like to be among those called “great”—and have a deep assurance in your heart that this will remain your status? If so, my friend, keep studying. These nine weeks will pass quickly, but I don’t believe they will go unchallenged in your life. There is an enemy who wants to keep you in darkness, who wants to entice you to sin, who doesn’t want you to know the truth. It is *truth* which keeps you from “the lie” and the “father of lies.” Don’t give in to him, Beloved. Persevere! It is well worth it.

— D A Y T W O —

If you were to analyze the people of your nation as a whole, who—or what—would you say is their master? It is what masters a people—what

captures their minds, their wills, and their bodies—that makes them what they are and determines how they live.

Take a good look around you. Think about your friends and associates. Consider the lifestyles of the so-called rich and famous. Watch the down-and-outers, the alcoholics, drug addicts, and amoral. What is the dominating factor of their lives? Where are they headed as a result of what or who has gained mastery over them? It is a wise person who considers these pathways—and their ultimate destinations—before choosing to follow a hero or role model. *Where do these lifestyles lead? What is their end result?* Ultimately it is not what we know that determines our destiny but what we *do*, what we allow to rule our lives.

The Sermon on the Mount speaks about that which masters our lives and the consequences of that mastery. If I had to pick one verse as a key to Matthew 5–7, it would be Matthew 5:20: “For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

The kingdom of heaven implies a realm of rulership. Where there’s a kingdom, there’s a king! As you worked through your study yesterday, you saw that the King of heaven is none other than our heavenly Father. According to Matthew 5:34, His throne is in heaven.

As you marked every reference to the kingdom or the kingdom of heaven yesterday, one thing you may have noted is that only the righteous will enter the kingdom of heaven—only those who possess a righteousness born from faith in the Righteous One, the Lord Jesus Christ. According to our Lord’s words, the poor in spirit and those persecuted for righteousness are among those who inherit the kingdom of heaven. Such people, because they have not only heard the Word of God but obeyed it, have a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees (Matthew 5:3,10,20; 7:21).

But will it be the same for everyone in the kingdom of heaven?

Will everything and everyone be “equal”?

Not according to Matthew 5:19. Some will be called “least” while

It is apparent from these verses that we can lay up treasures in heaven and that there will be rewards. What possible relationship do you see between these two verses and the judgment seat of Christ?

Have you ever thought about all this before—your accountability to God even as a Christian? Have you considered that you could miss certain rewards or treasures because you did not walk in obedience and dedication? Sobering thoughts aren't they? When I first heard about the judgment seat of Christ, I didn't like it! I wanted to believe that heaven would be the same for every child of God. As I have studied, however, I've seen that this isn't true! There are those who will be "least" and those who will be "greatest" in the kingdom of heaven!

Whenever I teach 2 Corinthians 5:10—that every Christian will "appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad"—one of the first things my students ask is, "What about our sins? Are we going to be judged for our sins?"

My answer to this question is no.

Jesus was judged for our sins when God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Since Jesus purged us from our sins, "having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time," there is therefore "no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 1:3; 10:12; Romans 8:1). We cannot be judged for what Jesus has already paid for!

However, when a Christian walks in sin for a period of time, that time is lost as far as being profitable for the glory of God and His kingdom. It is

wasted, for “apart from Me [Him] you can do nothing” (John 15:5). This, I believe, brings a resulting loss of reward.

While we are on the subject, let's look at one more passage that deals with a Christian's accountability. Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, printed below, and answer the questions that follow.

According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

1. What is the foundation?
2. What types of materials are used for building upon this foundation?
3. What is to be tested—and how?

4. What happens to the man...
 - a. whose work is burned up?

- b. whose work abides?

Because of its context, I believe this passage in 1 Corinthians 3 is primarily an admonition to teachers. But there is certainly a wider application here as well. Paul is warning all of us about our accountability to our Lord. His message? *Be careful how you build.*

Basically there are two types of “building materials”: those which can be produced by man—wood, hay, and straw—and those which already exist but must be discovered by man—gold, silver, and precious stones. God created the latter when He made the earth. Man only discovers and appropriates what is already there. But wood, hay, and straw are the fruits of man’s labor. They are temporal and can be destroyed by fire.

What is God saying in all of this? Simply that whatever man produces in and of himself, apart from God, has no eternal value; he will not receive a reward for it. However, the work that comes through us because of God has great and eternal value. It is worthy of reward.

When it comes to explaining the Judgment Seat of Christ—the rewards for the deeds done in our body—I feel like a child in my comprehension of it. Yet inadequate as our understanding may be, Beloved, judgment will surely come to pass because it is written in His unchangeable Word. Therefore, I want to live in the light of it. What about you? Would

doing so change the way you are living? If so, how? Think about it, write it out below...and then live accordingly!

The rewards may last forever.

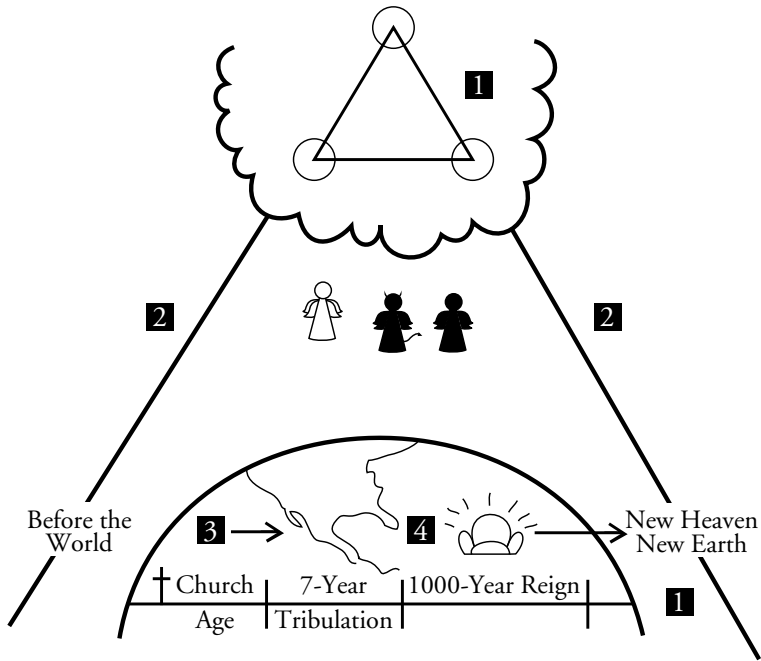
— D A Y T H R E E —

The theme of Jesus' sermon is the righteous lifestyle of those who belong to His kingdom. It makes sense, then, that we ought to learn as much as we can about the kingdom of heaven.

When you study all the references to the kingdom of heaven, you see that the term is used basically in four different ways. Let me give them to you:

THE FOUR ASPECTS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

1. *God's literal abiding place in the third heaven.* In 2 Corinthians 12, Paul speaks of being caught up to this place. This is God's dwelling place, the place of His throne as described in Revelation 4–5. It is where redeemed people go at their death.
2. *God's universal and eternal dominion over the heavens,* including all its angelic host, good and evil, and over the earth.
3. *The invisible spiritual rulership of Jesus Christ within the lives of those who have genuinely been born again of the Spirit of God.* This aspect of the kingdom began with Jesus' first coming and continues as men believe on and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their redeemer.
4. *Jesus' reign over the whole earth* at which time all other kingdoms are banished. Although there is debate among theologians and their followers, many believe this kingdom will last for a literal millennium which will begin at Christ's second coming to earth and con-



tinue for one thousand years on the earth as we know it now...and then take us into eternity.



For the sake of clarity, examine the simple graphic above, matching the numbers with those just given. The drawing may help you to gain a sense of time and place in these mysterious matters.

This is enough information to absorb in one day. Tomorrow we will begin a progressive study of each aspect of the kingdom of heaven. In the meantime, review what you have learned.

As you read about different aspects of the kingdom of heaven, where did you find yourself in relationship to each one? Could you relate to any of them? Has God ever taken up His residence as King in your life? Have you ever prayed that prayer commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer”? If so, did you truly mean it? Do you long for His kingdom to come, for His will to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven? These are good things to stop and meditate upon.

— D A Y F O U R —

Have you ever stretched out flat on your back in the grass on a warm summer day and gazed at the heavens? Have you ever found yourself wondering what it's like beyond that deep blue dome of sky? Or have you ever flown above the clouds, with the earth obscured from your view, and felt drawn to go even higher and higher—to see God? Sometimes I've gazed into a clear night sky, dazzled by the brilliance of stars cast like diamonds on black velvet, thinking of the time when Jesus will come to take me home.

Home! Heaven! What is it like where God is? Mark every reference to  God in yellow or with a triangle. Then, with another color or symbol, mark every reference to God's throne. Also mark any reference to the Spirit. I mark references to the Holy Spirit like this,  using one side of the triangle that represents God. Also, I highlight it in yellow. All this marking and coloring simply serve as learning tools to help us focus on, absorb, and remember what we are reading.

Revelation 4 and 5 give the best description I know of. Let's take some time, then, to read these two awesome chapters. As you read Revelation 4, printed out for you, try to get a mental picture of what is described. Then, at the end of the chapter, either list everything you learn about God's dwelling place or draw a simple diagram of what you have read.

Now wait a minute! Before you laugh at the last suggestion because you don't consider yourself an artist, let me tell you what has happened as a result of Precept Ministries' International four-part inductive study of Revelation. The students actually draw (everything from line drawings and stick figures to more elaborate works of "art") all the events of Revelation. Some begin kicking and screaming—but end up saying it was the most beneficial activity they had ever done, for now they can see the book in their "mind's eye."

So give it a try...nobody has to see your work, unless of course you want to show it to them.

If you choose to do the drawing, rather than simply listing what you observed, don't crowd your picture. You'll want to add a few more elements after reading Revelation 5.

❶ REVELATION 4

¹ After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.

³ And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.

⁴ And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.

⁵ And from the throne proceed flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;

⁶ and before the throne there was, as it were, a sea of glass like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.

7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle.

8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say,


“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, is THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, who was and who is and who is to come.”

9 And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 “Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.”

Now that you have completed Revelation 4, let's finish by doing the same with Revelation 5. Continue to mark chapter 5 as you did chapter 4. This time, however, you will also want to mark every reference to the

Lord Jesus Christ, including all pronouns and synonyms. I mark Jesus with a symbol like this  and highlight it in yellow. Also, as you read Revelation 5, carefully note *who* is singing the first new song and about *whom* they are singing besides Jesus. To whom does the pronoun “them” refer in the new song?

▶ REVELATION 5

1 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”

3 And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.

4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;

5 and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

7 And He came and took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying,

“Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 “And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Now, Beloved, why don't you get on your knees or on your face before God and spend some time simply worshiping Him, joining those around the throne saying, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

When you rise to go about your duties, remember, my friend, you exist because God willed it. You were created for His pleasure. Take Him at His word on this! Believe and feel the high value God has placed upon you. And then live accordingly! Refuse to believe Satan's lies.

Now...worship the Lamb:

Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth. (Revelation 5:9-10)

— D A Y F I V E —

The apostle Paul longed for heaven. His heart's desire was "to depart and be with Christ," the One for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, counting them but rubbish (Philippians 1:23; 3:8). He groaned, longing "to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

"At home with the Lord"!

That's where we said Caron is. Where is "at home with the Lord"? Paul says it's in the third heaven, paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4).

Is it through the empty space in the north of the heavens (Job 26:7)? It could be! Wherever it is, I know home is where God is!

What security this brings when things on this earth seem so temporal—and so shaky! God's children have a New Jerusalem awaiting them, a heavenly city where they will dwell forever in the very presence of God and His Son.

Let's take a closer look at our eternal city and see what we can learn for ourselves. There's nothing, beloved student, like seeing and studying God's Word for yourself. It's a discipline which will literally transform you more and more into His likeness because His Word is alive—powerful—sharper than any two-edged sword—a discerner of the thoughts and intents—the milk by which we grow—the meat of the mature. I commend you, my friend, for disciplining yourself for the purpose of godliness. You'll never be sorry. On the contrary, you will deeply regret it if you don't.

Now then...

1. Open your Bible, and read Revelation 21:1–22:5. Note who is speaking, who is referred to in this passage, what you learn about them, what this passage is about, what is described, where it is, how it looks, etc. You might want to list your observations below:

Who are those mentioned?

How are they described?

Where will they be?

The New Jerusalem: Where is it?

When will it appear?

What will it be like?

Who will be in it? Who will relate to it?

2. List the five things that impressed you the most from this passage of Scripture.

The New Jerusalem is the eternal destiny of every true child of God. It is as certain as God Himself, therefore:

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET

ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.” And this expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire. (Hebrews 12:25-29)

O Beloved...if you should die, would you find yourself in heaven, in the presence of God Himself...or in hell? Believe it or not, there are only two destinations at death—and once death comes, your destination is set.

Think about it.

MEMORY VERSE

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

MATTHEW 6:20-21

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. As you read the Sermon on the Mount, what made the most significant impression?
2. What did you learn about the kingdom of heaven?
3. How would you summarize Jesus' teaching in these chapters?
4. Which verse do you think best expresses the message of the Sermon on the Mount?
5. Using the Sermon on the Mount, describe the kind of righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

6. If some shall be called “least” in the kingdom of heaven and some called “great,” what determines the difference between them?
7. Do you look forward with anticipation or with fear to the judgment spoken of in 2 Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:10? Give the reason for your answer. If you feel dread, what changes will you make in your life?
8. If the foundation upon which we build is Jesus Christ, what might represent gold, silver, and precious stones? What might represent wood, hay, and stubble? What is the quality of your work?
9. What are the four aspects of the “kingdom” and the “kingdom of heaven”?
10. Describe the picture in your mind as you read the description of heaven given in Revelation 4–5. What did you discover about God from these chapters? What insights about the Holy Spirit did you gain?
11. How is the Lord Jesus Christ described in Revelation 4–5?
12. Revelation 21:1–22:5 offers a magnificent description of the new heaven, the new earth, and the new Jerusalem. What did you learn about each of these from this passage?
13. What truth from this lesson made the most impact on your life?



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