

Lesson
45

“He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things”

Revelation 1–3; 12

Purpose

To help class members understand some of the blessings that will come to those who overcome the trials of mortality through their testimony of Jesus Christ.

Preparation

1. Read, ponder, and pray about the following scriptures:
 - a. Revelation 1:1–3, 9–20. John is instructed to record the revelation he receives from the Lord through an angel. John sees in revelation several symbols representing parts of the Church of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Revelation 2–3. Through John, the Lord teaches the seven branches of the Church in Asia about the great blessings that await those who overcome the trials and temptations of mortality.
 - c. Revelation 12. John sees a vision of the War in Heaven and its continuation on the earth. He learns that the Saints overcome Satan through the Atonement of the Savior and their testimonies.
2. Additional reading: Revelation 21:7; Bible Dictionary, “Revelation of John,” 762–63.
3. If you use the attention activity, prepare to use the illustrations on page 191. You may want to draw larger versions of these illustrations on the chalkboard or a large piece of paper so all class members will be able to see them.
4. Suggestion for teaching: Good teachers are good listeners. Listening involves not just hearing but also trying to understand what is being said. Teachers who listen carefully communicate that they understand and value each class member. (See *Teaching—No Greater Call*, 168–70).

Suggested Lesson Development

Attention Activity

As appropriate, use the following activity or one of your own to begin the lesson.

Ask class members to think of symbols the Lord used in his teaching during his earthly ministry. (Answers may include salt, wheat and tares, bread, and olive trees.)

- Why are symbols useful in teaching? (They can help the learner understand and remember by comparing unfamiliar ideas or things to those that are more familiar; they can have different levels of meaning; they can encourage the learner to think more deeply about what is being taught.)

Explain that symbols are used throughout the scriptures, but especially in the book of Revelation. Show the illustrations on page 191, and point out that these illustrations show symbols that are discussed in chapter 1 of Revelation. Each of these symbols will be discussed in this lesson.

You may want to explain that the Apostle John, author of the book of Revelation, came out of a culture that used symbolism extensively in its language and

literature. Readers today often have difficulty with the symbolism in John's writings. If we interpret the images literally, the book of Revelation can seem strange and confusing. If we remember that many of the images are symbolic and represent people, things, or concepts with which we are already familiar, the book becomes easier to understand.

Scripture Discussion and Application

Prayerfully consider which scripture passages and questions from this lesson will best meet class members' needs. Spend the majority of class time discussing these passages and questions. Help class members see that the book of Revelation is relevant and useful to us today.

1. John sees several symbols representing parts of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Read and discuss Revelation 1:1–3, 9–20.

Review with the class the following general information about the book of Revelation:

John was one of the Savior's original Apostles. He had been banished by the Roman government to Patmos, a small island off the west coast of present-day Turkey, for bearing testimony of Jesus Christ. While there, John was visited by an angel and given a revelation that he recorded in letters to the seven branches of the Church in Asia (Revelation 1:1, 9–11). These letters became the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation is written primarily in symbolic language. Its theme is that "there will be an eventual triumph on this earth of God over the devil; a permanent victory of good over evil, of the saints over their persecutors, of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of men and of Satan. . . . The details about the beasts, the wars, the angels, the men, etc., contribute to the development of this theme. By a little study, the theme can be perceived even if the details are not completely identified" (Bible Dictionary, "Revelation of John," 762).

The three introductory chapters of the book record John's testimony of the truthfulness of the revelation, John's instructions from the Lord, and John's counsel to the seven branches of the Church in Asia. Chapter 4 records John's vision of heaven, and chapters 5 through 20 record his vision of the triumphant destiny of God's kingdom. This vision shows the battles against Satan's kingdom, the destruction of Satan's kingdom, and the final scenes in the world's history. After this is a vision of the new heavens and new earth—the world in its celestial state (Revelation 21:1–5). The book of Revelation concludes with the angel's testimony and additional counsel from the Lord.

- What was the first image, or symbol, John saw in this revelation? (See Revelation 1:12.) What did the candlesticks represent? (See Revelation 1:20.) Why are candlesticks an appropriate symbol for branches of the Church? (See 3 Nephi 18:24 and the quotation below.) How can wards and branches today act as candlesticks?

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: "Candlesticks carry light; they do not create it. Their function is to make it available, not to bring it into being. So by using seven candlesticks to portray the seven churches to whom John is now to give counsel, the Lord is showing that his congregations on earth are to carry his light to the world" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [1966–73], 3:442).

- Where was the Savior in relation to the seven candlesticks? (See Revelation 1:13.) How is the Savior in the midst of his Church today? Why is it important for us to know that he is in the midst of his people?
- What was the Savior holding in his right hand when he stood in the midst of the seven candlesticks? (See Revelation 1:16.) What did the seven stars represent? (See Revelation 1:20 and footnote 20*b*; see also Revelation 2:1, footnote 1*a*, and Revelation 3:1, footnote 1*a*. Throughout the Joseph Smith Translation of Revelation 1–3, the word *angels* is changed to *servants*, making it clear that the stars represent the leaders of the seven branches of the Church.) How are Church leaders like the stars? (Answers may include that they are constant and give direction to those who look for it.)
- What came out of the Savior’s mouth in this vision? (See Revelation 1:16.) What did this sword represent? (See D&C 6:2.) In what ways is the word of the Lord like a sword? (See Hebrews 4:12; Helaman 3:29.)
- What other symbol did the Lord possess in this revelation? (See Revelation 1:18.) What will the Savior do with these keys? (He will deliver all people from physical death, and he will deliver the righteous from spiritual death. See 2 Nephi 9:10–13.)

2. The Lord tells the seven branches in Asia about the blessings promised to those who overcome.

Discuss Revelation 2–3. Invite class members to read selected verses aloud. Explain that chapters 2 and 3 contain the words of the Lord to each of the seven branches of the Church in Asia. The Lord reviewed some of the strengths and weaknesses in each branch and warned the Saints to correct their weaknesses.

- Just as the Lord commended and corrected the Church members in Asia, he commends and corrects us today. What might the Lord commend us for? What has the Lord told us to correct?

Explain that in his instructions to the branches of the Church in Asia, the Lord also promised great blessings to those who would overcome the trials and temptations of mortality. Write on the chalkboard *Promises to Those Who Overcome*. As you discuss each promise, list it on the chalkboard under this heading.

To Ephesus (Revelation 2:1–7)

- The Lord warned the Ephesians of their need to repent, but he also promised, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.” What does the tree of life represent? (See 1 Nephi 11:21–22.) Why is this the most desirable of all blessings?

To Smyrna (Revelation 2:8–11)

- The Lord warned the Saints in Smyrna that they would suffer tribulation, but he also promised, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” What is the second death? (See Alma 12:16, 32; Helaman 14:18.) How can the Lord’s promise to the Saints in Smyrna help us see our tribulations in the proper perspective?

To Pergamos (Revelation 2:12–17)

- The Lord criticized some of the people in Pergamos for following the doctrine of Balaam, an Old Testament prophet who desired earthly honors and rewards more than he desired to follow the Lord's will. What earthly honors and rewards might we have to give up to obey the Lord's will?
- To the Saints in Pergamos the Lord promised, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (The word *hidden* in this context means sacred, or not evident to everyone.) What could hidden manna represent? (See John 6:35, 49–51.)

To Thyatira (Revelation 2:18–29)

- In his words to the Saints in Thyatira, what did the Lord promise to those who overcome? (See Revelation 2:26–28. Explain that these promises refer to the blessings of exaltation and eternal life, when the righteous will rule over heavenly kingdoms.) What is the rod of iron with which the righteous will rule over nations? (See 1 Nephi 11:25; Joseph Smith Translation, Revelation 2:27.) How can we use the word of God to rule our own lives?
- Who is the morning star mentioned in Revelation 2:28? (See Revelation 22:16.) What might it mean to be given the morning star? (Answers may include to receive Christ into our lives and to receive the blessings of his Atonement.)

To Sardis (Revelation 3:1–6)

- What blessings did the Lord promise to the Saints in Sardis? (See Revelation 3:5.) How does participation in temple ordinances prepare us to be "clothed in white" eternally? What is the book of life? (See D&C 128:7; see also Exodus 32:33; Alma 5:58; Bible Dictionary, "Book of Life," 626–27.) What will happen to those whose names are written in the book and are not blotted out because of wickedness? (See Revelation 21:10, 23–27; Alma 5:58; D&C 88:2.)

To Philadelphia (Revelation 3:7–13)

- What did the Lord say he would do for the Saints in Philadelphia because they had "kept [his] word, and . . . not denied [his] name"? (See Revelation 3:10.) How does righteous living make it easier to resist temptation?
- The Lord promised to those who overcome, "I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God." What does it mean to have the name of God and the name of his city written on us? (We become like God and become citizens of his eternal kingdom.)

To Laodicea (Revelation 3:14–22)

- The Lord condemned the Saints in Laodicea who were "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot" (Revelation 3:15–16). How might we sometimes be spiritually "lukewarm"? How can we increase our commitment to the gospel of Jesus Christ?
- The Lord promised the Laodiceans, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21). What blessings are symbolized by the promise of sitting with the Lord on his throne? (See Romans 8:16–17.)

Refer to the list of promises on the chalkboard, and explain that when all these promises are considered together, they describe the eternal destiny of the righteous. Have class members read Doctrine and Covenants 132:20 as a summary of these promises.

3. John learns that the Saints overcome Satan through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and their testimonies.

Read and discuss selected verses from Revelation 12. Explain that as part of his revelation, John saw a symbolic vision of the War in Heaven and its continuation on earth.

Explain that the woman described in Revelation 12:1–2, 5 represents the Church of God. The child she brought forth represents the kingdom of God—the government that will exist on the earth during Jesus Christ’s millennial reign. (See Joseph Smith Translation, Revelation 12:7; see also Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 1:229.)

- Whom does the dragon in Revelation 12 represent? (See Revelation 12:9.) What happened to the dragon and his followers in the War in Heaven? (See Revelation 12:3–4, 7–9.) What did the dragon do after he was cast out? (See Revelation 12:17.) Who is Satan fighting today? (See Revelation 12:12.)

President Wilford Woodruff said: “There are two powers on the earth and in the midst of the inhabitants of the earth—the power of God and the power of the devil. . . . When God has had a people on the earth, it matters not in what age, Lucifer, the son of the morning, and the millions of fallen spirits that were cast out of heaven, have warred against God, against Christ, against the work of God, and against the people of God. And they are not backward in doing it in our day and generation. Whenever the Lord set His hand to perform any work, those powers labored to overthrow it” (in *Deseret Evening News*, 17 Oct. 1896, 9; quoted by Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 56; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 43).

- How will the Church and kingdom of God finally overcome Satan? (See Revelation 12:11.) How can the Atonement of Christ and our testimonies of it help us in our individual struggles against Satan?

Conclusion

Testify that those who overcome the temptations and trials of the world will inherit the blessings of eternal life. Remind class members that the Savior’s Atonement provides a way for us to overcome if we repent and are faithful.

Additional Teaching Idea

The following material supplements the suggested lesson outline. You may want to use this idea as part of the lesson.

“Behold, I stand at the door” (Revelation 3:20)

Display the picture *Jesus at the Door* (62170; Gospel Art Picture Kit 237).

- What does Revelation 3:20 teach about the Lord? (See also Revelation 22:17.) How have you found this to be true?

