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Lesson 12

*June 15–21

Earth’s Closing Events

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week’s Study: *John 8:32; Ezek. 20:12, 20; Rev. 7:1, 2; Rev. 14:1; Joel 2:21–24; Hos. 6:3; James 5:7, 8; Rev. 18:1–4.*

Memory Texts: “Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding” (*Proverbs 23:23, NKJV*).

Tuesday

June 18

Whom Do We Worship?

****READ****

In the last days, the great controversy will be played out, in a dramatic way, over worship. Do we worship the Creator, or do we worship the beast and its image? There is no middle ground. The first angel of Revelation 14 urges men and women to “ ‘worship Him who

made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water” (Rev. 14:7, NKJV). In further support of heaven’s appeal, the third angel reveals the dire consequences of worshipping the beast: “The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation” (Rev. 14:10). By contrast, those who worship the Creator are described as keeping “the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12, NKJV).

You are worthy, O Lord

Revelation 4:11 “You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”

Creation is the basis of true worship (Rev. 4:11). Since God “created all things through Jesus Christ” (Eph. 3:9, NKJV), Satan hates the Creator and has attempted, through earthly powers, to change the Sabbath, the memorial of Creation (Dan. 7:25).

He shall speak *pompous* words

Daniel 7:25 He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

If anyone worships the beast and his image

Revelation 14:9-12 9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, “If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand,

10 he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name.”

12 Here is the patience of the saints; here *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The coming conflict over the law of God focuses on authority. If Satan can eradicate Sabbath worship, he will declare that his authority is greater than God's authority. To accomplish this, Satan will attempt to convince or coerce the entire world to accept a counterfeit Sabbath.

Psa 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.

However hard it may be now to see this happening, as we have noted before, **the world is changing dramatically. The COVID-19 crisis showed us that, overnight, our world can become a different place. Though we don't know the details that lead to the mark of the beast, it's not terribly hard to imagine.** The world is very unstable, and with the amazing technology out there now, what the Bible warns about can, indeed, come to pass more quickly than we might now imagine.

Read Revelation 13:13–17. What specific penalties are inflicted upon those that do not receive the mark of the beast?

He causes all, both small and great

Revelation 13:13–17 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

15 He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak and cause **as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed.**

16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has [g]the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Those who are faithful to Christ, as opposed to following the beast and its image, will face economic penalties as well as the threat of death.

Humanity remains what it has always been: corrupt, power-hungry, and violent. However much we don't yet know about exactly how the final events will unfold, it should not be too hard to envision end-time persecution. Though written in another context completely, these words in John say it all. Talking about Jesus, John wrote that He "had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man" (*John 2:25, NKJV*).

honoureth me with *their* lips

Mat 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

Mat 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

Oh, that *men* would give thanks

Psalm 107:8-9 8 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the Lord *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

Psalm 107:19 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, *And* He saved them out of their distresses.

20 He sent His word and healed them, And delivered *them* from their destructions.

21 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the Lord *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!

Who is worthy to open the scroll

Revelation 5:1;-2 1 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"

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

4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

5 But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

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

Worthy Is the Lamb

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

9 And they sang a new song, saying: “**You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,**

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power

Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

Think about the corruption of humanity, and the evil that humans are capable of doing. Why does this show how easily final events could come about? Also, even more important, what should this sad truth teach us about guarding our own hearts?

Lyrics God and God Alone lyrics

Composer Phil McHugh

Sung by: Steve Green

God and God alone
Created all these things we call our own
From the mighty to the small

The Glory in them all
Is God's and God's alone

God and God alone
Is fit to take the universe's throne
Let everything that lives
Reserve it's truest praise
For God and God alone

God and God alone
Reveals the truth of all we call unknown
And the best and worst of man
Won't change the Master's plan
It's God's and God's alone

God and God alone
Will be the joy of our eternal home
He will be our one desire
Our hearts will never tire
Of God's and God's alone