

The Sunday School Lesson

by Bessie Wilbon

INTRODUCTION:

"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." So said a great multitude, and the sound of it was "as the voice of mighty thunders." Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him."
The book of Revelation is truly a message of hope, and yet even now some people remain without help. "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." For those redeemed from the lake of fire there is a city that is bright but not burning, a city aglow with the glory of God.

THE LESSON:

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the thrones: 'Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared. Then the one who sits on the throne said, 'And now I make all things new!' He also said to me, 'Writ this, because these words are true and can be trusted.' And he said, 'It is done! I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the right to drink from the spring of the water of life without paying for it. Whoever wins the victory will receive this from me: I will be his God, and he will be my son.' (Reve. 21: 1-7)

"I did not see a temple in the city, because its temple is the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. The city has no need of the sun or the moon to shine on it, because the glory of God shines on it and the Lamb is its lamp. The peoples of the world will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their wealth into it. The gates of the city will stand open all day; they will never be closed, because there will be no night there. The greatness and the wealth of the nations will be brought into the city. But nothing that is impure will enter the city, nor anyone who does shameful things or tells lies. Only those names are written in the Lamb's book of the living will enter the city." (Revelations 21: 22-27)

John saw in a vision what all of us will see in reality if we are faithful to the Savior: a new heaven and a new earth. We may wonder why there was no more sea. We like to sit on the beach and watch the ceaseless motion of the waves. We like to swim in the water and sail over the surface. We enjoy seafood. Why should there be no more sea in the better world to come? Our text gives no reason, but here are a few guesses: (1) The sea can be deadly. Many have perished in it. The new earth will have no such threat. (2) The sea separates people.

John may have been keenly aware of this when he was imprisoned on an island and could not be with his brethren on the mainland. There will be no such barrier in the world to come. Some students think the sea is a symbol of the heathen - wild, uncontrolled, in the rebellion against God and His law. There will be no unbelief or rebellion in the new earth. Lovely as the city is with its gold and jewels, this is its best feature: God will live there with His people. But isn't He here with us even now? Yes, He is. He lives in His church in each individual Christian. But He is invisible to our mortal and failures. In the new Jerusalem He will be clearly seen. No fault of ours will obscure His presence, for we then shall be faultless. When we become immortal we shall become incorruptible in every way.

We can choose our destination, and the time to choose is now. But the choice is not one to be made once and then forgotten. It is a choice to live by as long as we live on earth. If we choose the holy city and faithfully live by that choice, then have we earned a right to the new Jerusalem? No, we are not that good. If we do all we ought to do from now on, we are still unprofitable servants. If the holy city is our chosen destination, we need help. We can't get there without it.

All of us have sinned. The wages of sin is death. If we receive eternal life instead, it is a gift, not a right. If we are saved from death, we are saved by God's grace because of our faith, not because of the good we do.

We are not saved by doing good, but neither are we saved without doing good. In the final judgment, each person is judged by what he has done, and according to what he has done he is assigned to his destination. Our faith has a part in our salvation. (Read James 2:24) and our works have a part; but nothing we have can buy a ticket to the holy city, and nothing we do can earn our way there. We each need help.

Fortunately for us, help is available. Jesus died to atone for our sins. He paid the penalty. He suffered the death that we deserve. Therefore, we can be forgiven and cleansed. We can stand in judgment as spotless as if we had never sinned. Praise the Lord!

We can choose to stand up in haughty pride and say, "We need no help. No one is going to tell us what to do. We will do as we please!" That is the way to the lake of fire.

On the other hand we can devote our lives to God's service, confessing our sins and looking to Him for forgiveness. That is the way to the holy city.

The choice is ours.
"Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou Art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand."

You Must Know Jesus When Judgement Comes

No matter what your life standing is here, if you refused to bow to Christ as your Lord and Saviour, you'll be brought before the righteous Judge of the universe to be told of your fate. You may have been a millionaire in life, but at THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT you will be on the same level as a pauper who refused to repent. At this judgment all the lost souls will be equal before God. All will be undone sinners facing the wrath of a sin-avenging God. Vengeance belongs to God (Deut. 32:35) and at this judgement, every lost person comes face to face with his Maker.

You will be judged out of those things written in the books. Two records are being kept of your life, every thought as well as every act. One record is being kept in the walls of your memory and the other record God is keeping of your every thought and act. At THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT both records will tally. They won't lie and neither will you. I will meet you at that judgment as God's servant. You won't ask me there; "Brother Little, why didn't you warn us?" Friend and foe alike, repent and believe that Gospel. This is the only way you'll be safe when this judgment is set. Christ is your only hope. You have got to know Christ. Do you know Christ? How will you fare at the judgment?

There was a time in my life when the Holy Spirit was dealing with my heart for salvation when I was afraid to face this judgment. I knew I was a lost sinner and if I went out into eternity without Christ, I'd have to face a thrice holy God before whom I couldn't stand on my own. It was under HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTON I was made to cry for mercy from this Judge who could save me or damn me according to His won sovereign will. He made me see I had no claim on Christ, who alone could be my Substitute. And it was the greatest thing in all my life that day He washed away all my sins and showed me He had blessed me from eternity to eternity and I could never perish. What about you? Are you a sinner? I don't know if the Lord is going to save you or not. Some of you are very kind to me though. Some, even though you are not saved, have helped me a great deal and you show more compassion for me than some believers. But I'll meet you there at the judgment and I'll have to witness against you if you fail to come to know my Lord.

There will be such weeping at THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT it'll surpass all the weeping that occurred as a result of the world wars, large or small. Oh, what a weeping and mourning will take place. Sometimes when I look at a picture of some loved one who went out into eternity without Christ, I sit here weeping and thinking about seeing that soul again at

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGEMENT. Oh, the sadness of it all! You didn't deem the salvation of your poor, lost soul to be the most important thing in this life. What a tragedy it is to go out under the cloud without Christ. How will you go out? Will you go the speaking to you of, but eternal realities. You can call me crazy but you won't be in eternity two minutes before you change your mind and see that I was right in warning you about the eternal destiny of your soul. And you will say, "I wish I had listened, oh, I wish I had listened!" Young man, young woman, where are you going? How are you, my friend, going to stand before a thrice holy and righteous God at the blazing Great White Throne Judgment? It is going to bring a flood of tears to each believer there that day, seeing his loved ones and friends tried. And you and I who know the Lord will have to witness against them.

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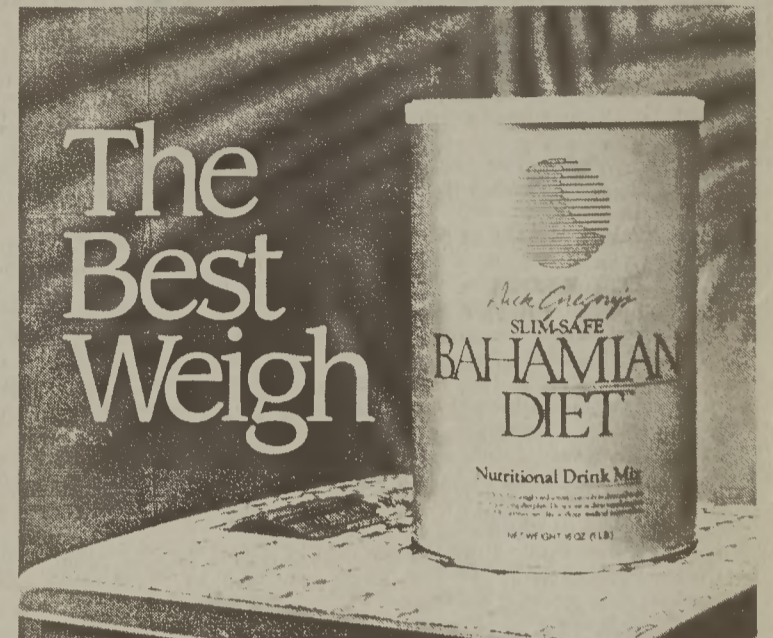


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How did you hear about Focus on Leadership? _____

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What do you expect to gain from participation in Focus on Leadership? _____

Give reason(s) why you should be selected for admission to Focus on Leadership. (What qualities about yourself make you an ideal candidate? Cite life references, if pertinent.) _____

In terms of your life goals, etc., what do you expect to be doing five years from today? Ten years? _____

Please submit at least two letters of reference/recommendation.

Signature of commitment: _____

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