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Next Weeks Lesson: "He Will Dwell with Them, and They Shall Be His People"

([Revelation 5-6](#); [Revelation 19-22](#))

**Today's Lesson: "He That Overcometh Shall Inherit All Things" ([Revelation 1-3](#); [Revelation 12](#))**

Think of symbols the Lord used in his teaching during his earthly ministry.

- Why are symbols useful in teaching?



Symbols are used throughout the scriptures, but especially in the book of [Revelation](#). These illustrations show symbols that are discussed in [Revelation 1](#). Each of these symbols will be discussed in this lesson.



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.

## 1. John sees several symbols representing parts of the Church of Jesus Christ. ([Revelation 1:1-3](#), [Revelation 1:9-20](#)).

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](#), [Revelation 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.

**A.** 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).

**B.** 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?

**C.** 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 20b](#); see also [Revelation 2:1](#), [footnote 1a](#), and [Revelation 3:1](#), [footnote 1a](#). 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?

**D.** 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](#).)

**E.** What other symbol did the Lord possess in this revelation? (See [Revelation 1:18](#).) What will the Savior do with these keys? (See [2 Nephi 9:10-13](#).)

**2. The Lord tells the seven branches in Asia about the blessings promised to those who overcome. ([Revelation 2-3](#))**

[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.

- A.** 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?

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.

*To Ephesus* ([Revelation 2:1-7](#))

- B.** 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](#))

- C.** 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](#), [Alma 12:32](#); [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](#))

- D.** 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?
- E.** 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](#), [John 6:49-51](#).)

*To Thyatira* ([Revelation 2:18-29](#))

- F.** In his words to the Saints in Thyatira, what did the Lord promise to those who overcome? (See [Revelation 2:26-28](#). 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?

- G. Who is the morning star mentioned in [Revelation 2:28](#)? (See [Revelation 22:16](#).) What might it mean to be given the morning star?

*To Sardis* ([Revelation 3:1-6](#))

- H. 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](#), [Revelation 21:23-27](#); [Alma 5:58](#); [D&C 88:2](#).)

*To Philadelphia* ([Revelation 3:7-13](#))

- I. 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?
- J. 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?

*To Laodicea* ([Revelation 3:14-22](#))

- K. 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?
- L. 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](#).)

When all these promises are considered together, they describe the eternal destiny of the righteous. Let’s Read [D&C 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. ([Revelation 12](#))

As part of his revelation, John saw a symbolic vision of the War in Heaven and its continuation on earth. The woman described in [Revelation 12:1-2](#), [Revelation 12:5](#)

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.)

- A.** 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](#), [Revelation 12:7-9](#).) 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](#)).

- B.** 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?

Those who overcome the temptations and trials of the world will inherit the blessings of eternal life. The Savior’s Atonement provides a way for us to overcome if we repent and are faithful.