



John Testifies to the Exalted Jesus Christ

Revelation 1:1–20



LESSON GOAL

Students will be encouraged that despite trials, Jesus Christ continues to remain faithful to His church.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- John tells the churches in Asia what he saw.
- John sees Jesus Christ in all His glory.
- Jesus is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,” the One “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

KEY VERSE

“Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.” —*Revelation 1:17b–19*

APPLICATION

- Eagerly wait for Jesus’ return.
- Obey Jesus Christ as King and Lord of the entire universe.
- Thank Jesus for continuing to love and look after His people.
- Tell others about the risen Christ.

NEXT WEEK

John Sees the Worthy Lamb
Revelation 5:1–14

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to...

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are...

- _____
- _____
- _____

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

Materials Needed:

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

As we approach the book of Revelation, we come upon the last chapter in God’s redemptive story; telling us how it all ends. From the Old Testament up until this point, we have seen God working out His plan of redemption through Adam, the patriarchs, the prophets, right on up to His beloved Son Jesus Christ. Now that we are at the end of this revealed redemptive plan, it is this Jesus Christ that we see once again. In fact, it is this very Christ that we see as the central theme of the entire book. Above all its features, the book of Revelation reveals the majesty and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Throughout the book of Matthew we read of his birth as the son of David, his teachings and miracles while on the earth, as well as his death and resurrection from the cross; all of which affirmed his deity and Messianism before men. Yet where the gospel of Matthew presented Christ in His first coming in humiliation, the book of Revelation now presents Him in His second coming in exaltation. Every vision and description of Him in Revelation is one of majesty, power and glory. In it the heavens are opened and its readers see, as did Stephen (Acts 7:56), visions of the risen, glorified Son of God.

As far as context is concerned, the year is 96 A.D. during the reign of Domitian of Rome. Throughout this period the church is undergoing immense persecution. John has been exiled to an island known as Patmos (1:9), at least one believer has already suffered martyrdom (2:13), and more persecution looms on the horizon (2:10). Despite such opposition, the church continues to grow, spreading rapidly throughout the province of Asia (not being limited to the cities mentioned in Revelation). It is to this suffering church in Asia that Revelation is given (1:4). This testimony about the coming glory of Jesus Christ is recorded and sent by way of the apostle John to encourage His church to persevere in the midst of suffering; drawing their hearts and minds to the reassuring truth that Christ will one day come to permanently conquer, rule, and gather His own unto Himself.

Christ’s Revelation Introduced (Rev. 1:1–3)

John the disciple had a very special place in Jesus’ heart. Having walked and talked with Him while He was on this earth, John was referred to in many of the gospels as the disciple in whom Jesus loved (John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20). We saw much of this special relationship in the gospel of Matthew, as John (along with three others) was chosen from among the disciples to witness Jesus’ transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–13) and to even join Him as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane just hours before his death (Matt. 26:37). Well many years have now passed since Christ’s death and resurrection, and John continues to faithfully follow His Lord (John 19:35; 21:24; 1 John 1:2; 4:14). In fact, as will be noticed later, John even now is spending the latter years of his life suffering on account of having shared

the testimony of the Messiah (1:9). Having observed the teachings and miracles of Christ, John has been faithful to bear witness to the word of God and to the testimony of His Son Jesus (Rev 1:2). With all this in mind, it is of little wonder why Jesus now chooses to impart this revelation of future things to come to His faithful and beloved friend, John the disciple.

John begins recording this revelation with a very informative introduction and exhortation. This letter is the revelation that God has now given to His Son Jesus regarding the things to come in the future. Christ, having already been crucified and resurrected, now sits at His place with His Father in heaven (Heb 1:3). The first token of the Father's pleasure with the obedient Son was His resurrection; the second was His ascension; and third was the sending of the Holy Spirit. Having pleased His Father in every way, God has now given Jesus a revelation to reveal to His servants on earth. To impart this message to His people, Jesus has chosen to entrust this message with His beloved friend John. After receiving this message by way of an angel of God, John faithfully records that which he heard and saw from the risen Christ. Since the events recorded therein are soon to take place, John exhorts others who follow Christ to read these words aloud, to hear them, and to keep them safe until Christ's return. The knowledge that the events depicted in the book of Revelation are soon to take place has and should motivate Christians (both then and now) to live holy, obedient lives unto the Lord (2 Pet 3:14). Those who are obedient to such an exhortation will be considered blessed in the eyes of God.

Christ to Be Exalted Among the Seven Churches of Asia (Rev. 1:4–8)

After vv. 1–3, the apostle John goes on to add a bit of an expansion to the introduction of this letter. It is in this expansion that we find clues as to the themes of the rest of the letter. That John expounds so fully on Jesus' roles in 1:5–6 suggests the central place that Christ will play in this book, as well as the end times. Part of this role will be to impart grace and peace to the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia. John here has recognized, and is experiencing first hand, the persecution that the church was facing at that time. Because of such persecution, the apostle understands just how necessary the blessings of both grace and peace are in difficult times as these. What is most interesting here is that this blessing comes from the entire Trinity.

That God "is, and...was, and...is to come" frames the source of the entire blessing (1:4, 8) (also echoes Exod. 3:14), a point that John certainly wishes to underline by encapsulating this section of the chapter with this particular phrase. As to "the seven spirits who are before His throne," many take this to be the "sevenfold Spirit" of Isaiah 11:2 or some other analogy for the Spirit of God. This view allows us to understand the "seven spirits" here as the third persons of the Trinity. If we read the seven spirits as God's Spirit here, 1:4–5 invokes a blessing from the Trinity: Father, Spirit, and Son. Regardless of whether John invokes the Trinity here, he closes with Jesus because his role is the central focus. After all, it is especially because of their allegiance to Jesus that John's readers face opposition from the synagogue community and hence from Rome.

John here provides three titles that describe Jesus' person in 1:5 and three statements about his work in 1:5–6. Each of Jesus' titles in 1:5 provides special encouragement to the suffering church: Jesus had testified (and so suffered like many of John's first audience), had risen from the dead (a promise of hope to that audience), and now reigns (an assurance against their persecutors). That Jesus is the "firstborn from the dead" does not recall that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead, but rather that out of all those who had ever been or ever will be resurrected, His is the greatest. This resurrection was especially relevant to Christians who might soon face death for his name. As the "firstborn," Jesus' resurrection was

the guarantee that those who followed him in death would be raised as well (1 Cor. 15:20)—hence they had nothing to fear, even from death itself (Rev. 1:17–18). That Christ also rules over the kings of the earth is also refreshing to the church. The language alludes to Psalm 89:27, where God’s “firstborn” rules over the “kings of the earth.” To believers suffering under agents of mighty Caesar, this title of Jesus would have encouraged them indeed!

As John lists three titles of Jesus in 1:5, he also lists three works of Jesus in 1:5–6: He “loves us”; he “freed us from our sins”; and he “made us...a kingdom and priests.” Jesus’ love for us is expressed in his death on our behalf, as elsewhere in the New Testament (John 3:16; Rom 5:5–8; Gal 2:20). This assurance of Christ’s love would encourage the suffering believers among John’s readers; his death also provides an example for those called to join the Lamb’s sacrifice on behalf of God’s mission in the world (Rev 6:9).

In declaring that Jesus made us a “kingdom and priests,” John reminds his audience of what God has saved them for; and that is to be agents and worshippers (1:6). As priests (an allusion back to God’s treasured possession in Exod. 19:5–6), Jesus’ followers will offer worship (Rev. 4:10–11, 5:8–10) and offerings, both the incense of prayer (5:8; 8:4) and the sacrifice of their own lives (6:9). From his statement concerning being part of a priesthood, it is not surprising that John then pauses to offer a doxology to Jesus (1:6). The work of Christ on behalf of believers caused John to burst forth in praise to the risen Christ. Because of his work on the cross, John and his readers had utmost reason to rejoice. Christ’s shed blood on the cross had ultimately released them from their sins. They now stood as sinners forgiven by God, set free from sin, death, and hell by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

John closes his greeting to the seven churches with an encouraging promise (1:7), and another affirmation of God’s character (1:8). The promise: Jesus is coming! That Jesus would return in the clouds reflects Daniel 7:13; that those who pierced him would see him and mourn reflects Zechariah 12:10. No assurance could have better encouraged suffering believers than the knowledge that Jesus will come to set matters right, and that the church’s oppressors will have to acknowledge the wrong they have done to God’s servants. This hope that Christ will one day return and take believers to heaven to live forever in His presence provides hope and comfort (John 14:1–3; 1 Thess 4:18).

Finally, John confirms once again that all history is in God’s hands—the future as well as the present (1:8); thus his people need not fear as if something will happen to them apart from God’s plan. Their God is “the Alpha and the Omega”; a title that alludes back to the book of Isaiah where God is declared as being the “first” and the “last” (Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). Like the one “who is, and who was, and is to come,” to God all history from beginning to end is the same to him. God is not only Lord over time, but he also rules the entire universe: he is “Almighty,” a common title for God in this book (1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7, 14; 19:6, 15; 21:22). For Christians suffering under Caesar, the emperor, knowing that they served the “Almighty” must have provided strength. Caesar might rule his empire there in limited ways, but God rules both the world and its course of history.

Christ Envisioned (Rev. 1:9–16)

Immediately after his greeting the seven churches, John quickly turns to describe his vision of the risen Christ. Here the apostle humbly identifies himself as a one sharing in the suffering that the church was currently experiencing. This suffering was on account of them having given testimony of Jesus, for by this point Christianity had become a hated and despised religious sect within the Roman Empire. That John shared in this suffering is evident in the fact that he was on the

island of Patmos (1:9), a barren island strictly used by the Roman empire to house those who had been exiled. The leaders of John's society had cut him off from everything else familiar to him, but the aged prophet still retained his greatest security: God remains sovereign in testing (1:8), and just as he suffered with Christ, he would also reign with him (Rom 8:17; 2 Tim 2:12). If he shared with his fellow believers the sufferings of Christ, he also shared Christ's perseverance and ultimately his kingdom, as this passage declares (1:9).

While worshipping on the Lord's Day, John hears a loud voice instructing him: "Write what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." These seven churches were chosen because they were located in the seven major cities unto which the province of Asia was divided. John was to strategically deliver the Revelation of Jesus Christ to these churches because this would have provided a fast and efficient way of sending out the message. When John turns to hear the voice "like a trumpet," he sees "seven golden lampstands" (1:12), identified in verse 20 as the seven churches. These lampstands were golden because gold was the most precious metal. The church is to God the most beautiful and valuable entity on earth—so valuable that Jesus was willing to purchase it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). While these were actual churches in real places, the seven lampstands are symbolic of the kinds of churches through out all of church history.

In the middle of the lampstands John saw "one like a son of man" (1:13). This is none other than the glorified Lord of the church, Jesus Christ. What is most significant here is that Jesus appears among the lampstands (1:12–13; 2:1). Since Christ explains these lampstands as being the churches in all their fullness (1:20), His appearing among the lampstands in the vision probably suggested Jesus' presence with His church (John 20:19). That Jesus was present with the churches in this vision would have been a significant encouragement to those who were suffering for his name. The encouragement here is that Christ has not left them. He has been faithful to the promise He made back in the gospel of Matthew, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20; also Heb 13:5).

The first thing that John noticed was that Christ was "clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest" (1:13b). The robe and sash recall the biblical high priest in the temple (Exod. 28:4; 39:29; Lev. 8:7) and suggest that Jesus is his people's high priest. Thus Jesus appears not only as king, but as priest, a combination of images that grew familiar to Jewish people. As High Priest, Christ once offered the perfect and complete sacrifice for sins and permanently, faithfully intercedes for His people (Rom. 8:33–34). The knowledge that their High Priest was moving sympathetically in their midst to care for and protect His own provided great comfort and hope to the persecuted churches.

The rest of John's vision of the son of man notes the deity of the risen Christ, much of which was foreseen in the book of Daniel. Daniel 7:13–14 recalls a figure who likened as "the son of man" would reign as God's agent. The hair like wool and comparison with white snow (1:14) alludes to God himself, the "Ancient of Days" in the same Daniel passage. The voice like "the sound of rushing waters" (1:15; 19:6) even recalls the sound of God's own voice as many waters in Ezek. 1:24; 43:2. Even the point of Jesus' fiery eyes, white hair, and bronze feet (1:14–15) is that he was radiating light or fire—drastically similar to many other visions of God in the Bible (Ezek. 1:27; Dan. 7:9–10; Rev. 21:23; 22:5). This is why John could only describe his face as "like the sun shining in its strength" (1:16c). John's vision of the glorified Lord of the church culminated in this description of the radiant glory evident on His face. This appearance of Jesus in his glorified state was of great importance for Christians of any race or culture. The risen Lord is powerful,

even deity, and therefore can protect and empower his people in the face of their oppressors. This is evident in the very sword that came out of his mouth (1:16b) and him holding the seven stars (or messengers/leaders of the church) in his right hand (1:16a, 20a). The point of Jesus' description here was not to tell the churches of his appearance but to declare his power. He was the reigning Lord of the universe, the one with power over life and death (1:18). John was writing to persecuted Christians, reminding them that God was bigger than their trials; and that day John's message spoke across the churches as they recognized the awesome power of their faithful Lord.

Christ's Message (Rev. 1:17–20)

While the envisioned Christ would have been encouraging to the churches, of greater importance was his message. In a manner similar to his experience with the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration (cf. Matt 17:6), John was again overwhelmed with terror at the manifestation of Christ's glory and "fell at His feet like a dead man" (1:17). And just as He had done so long ago at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:7), Jesus "placed his right hand on" John and issued to the frightened apostle the comforting words of "Do not be afraid" (1:17). While overwhelmed by the glory and majesty of Christ, John was to find comfort in the assurance of God's gracious love and merciful forgiveness. This message of comfort and assurance that Jesus offers is based on both who He is and the authority He possesses.

First, Jesus identified Himself as "I am"—the covenant name of God (Exod. 3:14). It was this name with which He had comforted the terrified disciples who saw Him walking on the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:27). Jesus next identified Himself as "the first and the last," which was another title used of God in the Old Testament (Isa 44:6; 48:12). This title again reaffirms to John and his readers the deity of Christ. Inferred by the title is the reality that Jesus has existed before all things and will continue to exist eternally. Jesus is far greater and superior than any of the false gods of surrounding nations, and when all of them have come and gone, only He will remain.

The entire message of 1:18 also involves Jesus' triumph over death. In the Bible and Jewish tradition, God is the "Living God" or the "Living One," but Jesus is specifically called the "Living One" here because, though he had died, he is alive forever. Paul even wrote that "Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him" (Rom. 6:9). Early Christians actually recognized this resurrection of Christ as the literal first fruits, or first installment, of the future resurrection. Thus by rising from the dead, Jesus guaranteed eternal life to all his followers, even if they faced death for his name (20:4). Since Christ now always "lives to make intercession" for His people, he "is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb. 7:25). Despite his sinfulness in the presence of the glorious Lord of heaven, John had nothing to fear because that same Lord had paid by His death the penalty for his sins (and those of all who believed in Him) and risen to be his eternal advocate.

Because of his victory over death, Jesus also held the "keys of death and Hades" (Rev. 1:18). Hades was a Greek deity who ruled over the realm of the dead, the "house of Hades." "Death and Hades" therefore represented death's power over creation. For Jesus to hold the keys of Hades denotes the fact that He possessed all authority over death. For John to have seen such a vision of Christ would have made ultimate sense to those of the first century church. In ancient palaces of that day, the one who held the keys was an important official, able to admit or shut out people from the king's presence. Christ therefore has the authority to decide who dies and who lives; He controls life and death. Understanding this John, like all the redeemed, had nothing fear, since Christ had already delivered him from death

and Hades by His own death. Knowing this that Christ has authority over death provided those of the churches with assurance, since believers no longer have reason to fear it.

At the end of the vision, John is given an added reminder of his duty. Christ's earlier command to "write" (Rev. 1:11) is now expanded on, is John as told to record three features. First, "the things which you have seen" the vision John had just seen and recorded in verses 10–16. Next, "the things which are," which is a reference to the letters to the seven churches describing the present state of the church. Finally, John was to write "the things which will take place after these things," the prophetic revelations of future events unfolded in visions to come. Christ here closes the vision with his beloved follower by reminding him of his duty to pass on the truths he had learned in the visions.

Conclusion

In the book of Revelation, Christ has given his church a very encouraging yet sobering message. As the apostle John was faithful to have written this revelation down, the persecuted church of that day would have been given comfort and assurance in the fact that Christ, their Messiah, is now exalted. As they are suffering opposition, or perhaps even death, at the hand of Caesar, they are to be encouraged that Christ still continues to live and reign with His Father. He has defeated death by giving His life for the sins of men. Now that death is defeated, all that is left is that final day when He will return for His own. This "time is near" and will be unexpected (Mark 13:32–37; 1 Thess 5:2). It is for this very reason that Christ is calling those of that time to be ready, which can readily apply today. Jesus' return will bring the final scene of human rebellion to close—an announcement that is a happy ending to God's people, but a tragic one for all who choose to reject his way. Because the specific time is unknown and near, no one dare postpone repentance. There is never a good time for Christians to be attached to worldly possessions or allegiances, because there is never a time when testings or the Lord's literal return may not call us to account for all of our choices.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Where was Paul going in last week's lesson?

Paul was heading to Rome.

Where did Paul live while he was under arrest?

Paul was allowed to live in his own rented house while he was under arrest.

What did Paul tell the Jewish leaders in Rome?

He told the Jewish leaders that he was innocent of why he had been arrested.

He also told them about the kingdom of God and the good news about Jesus.

What did the Jewish leaders think about what Paul had said?

They said that they hadn't heard about Paul but they would like to. When Paul shared the good news about Jesus some believed and others did not.

What did Paul say to those that rejected his message?

Paul said that they were rejecting God's word just as their ancestors had done.

How long did Paul share the good news about Jesus while in Rome?

Paul continued to share the gospel with many people while in Rome for two years.



Difficult Concepts

Prophecy: God gave men called prophets the special ability to tell what would happen in the future. A prophecy was God's message about the future. Prophecies told about future events before they happened, but their purpose was to encourage holy living. Explain that weathermen try to predict what weather will happen in the future, but they are not always right. God's prophets were always right about the future. Ask the students how they would act if you told them there was going to be free ice cream outside when they went on their bathroom break. They would all look for it and be excited. It would change how they felt and acted about their bathroom break. Similarly, prophecies were meant to encourage or motivate Christians to live for Christ right now. Prophecy is intended to change how Christians live.

Symbolism: A symbol is an object used to represent an idea, person, or event. For instance, an American flag is the symbol for our country. A "+" is the symbol for addition. The book of Revelation uses symbols often to help us picture what it is talking about. Symbols stand for something else. Draw a musical note on the board. Ask the students what that symbol represents. Explain that the note isn't music, it only represents music.

Revelation: Revelation means to expose or present something that was hidden. It can be telling or showing something people didn't know before. Write a simple message like "Hello class!" on the board and have it covered up. Remove the covering to show the class what it means to reveal.



Visual Aids

Bring in pictures, representations or the actual objects of the following: a sword, sun, waterfall, belt, white wool, stars, and keys. Ask the students what each object reminds them of or makes them think of. Explain that in today's lesson we will learn about Jesus, and how each of these objects describes something about Him.



Waterfall

Find sound bites of a waterfall. The internet or background tapes of nature noises are good places to find waterfall sounds. Play a loud portion of a pounding waterfall for your class. Ask if any of them have ever been to a waterfall and heard how loud a waterfall can be.



Fear

Ask your students what they are afraid of. Discuss the dark, or thunder storms, or heights, or snakes. Tell them that the great apostle John, who wrote Revelation, also had something he was afraid of. Explain John's fear when he saw the exalted Christ. He was so afraid he fell over like he was dead, but Jesus told him not to be afraid. Ask the students how their moms and dads comfort them when they are

afraid. Jesus comforted John by explaining he was safe. This discussion can be used to explain how Jesus' words would have been an encouragement to the people who were in persecution at this time.



Encouragement

Discuss with the students different ways that they are encouraged. Some may say that a nice word is encouraging, others might say a hug. Explain to the students that in John's fear and in the church's persecution encouragement was needed. Ask the students how Jesus' actions and words would have been an encouragement to both.



5

Encouraging Game

The revelation of Jesus Christ provided a great encouragement to the church. To introduce this concept of encouragement instruct the students to line up in a huge circle. Take this opportunity in the class time to have each student then say something encouraging to the person sitting next to them.



To Reveal

Many of the students might not understand what a revelation is which then hinders their ability to understand the revelation of Jesus Christ mentioned in today's lesson. To illustrate this, have the students close their eyes. While none of them are able to see, begin describing a specific object (i.e. apple, tire, etc.). As the students are listening to your description, each of them will then be able to guess the identity of the object being described once they think they have figured it out. This provides an opportunity to explain the nature of revealing something and to mention how John himself received a revelation from Jesus in today's lesson. Revelation can also be illustrated by hiding an object or snack before the students arrive. As revelation is being described reveal the object hidden.



Who Is John?

Take some time before the lesson to describe who John is and what things he has done. This can also be done during the lesson by a teacher dressed up as John. John could introduce himself and then tell what had happened from his perspective.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

More than sixty years had passed since Jesus Christ had died and come to life again, and His church was still growing. John, one of Jesus' disciples and the last one who was still alive, was an old man, yet he continued to seek out ways to strengthen the people of the many churches. The men and women who were part of the church were being hurt because of what they believed. We call this persecution. Some were even being killed because they followed Jesus. John himself had been arrested and sent away to a small island called Patmos far away from other Christians.

While on the island of Patmos, God gave John a special vision and instructed him to write down what he saw. Then John was to send this message in a letter to the seven churches that were in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. The purpose of the letter was to encourage the believers who were in these churches by telling them about what would happen in the future to the church and how Christ would come again and reign as king over all the earth in great glory. The church was under such strain and persecution, and this message would encourage them greatly to know that in the end, no matter how terrible things felt at that time, that God will be glorified and those who are evil will be punished.

In his vision, John saw Jesus, but He looked different than He had while He was on earth. John's vision had a lot of symbols, which meant that each of the things that he saw had a special meaning. When he saw Jesus, Jesus was wearing a long robe that was tied with a gold sash. This was the kind of clothing that a priest would wear, so it was a symbol of Jesus acting as the high priest. His hair was bright and white, which was a symbol of His holiness. His eyes were like flames of fire, which was to show that Jesus could see through to the hearts of the people of the church. Jesus' feet were like fine brass, which was a symbol of His judgment. And His voice sounded like rushing water, which was a symbol of the authority of His words.

When Jesus spoke to John, He had a message for him to pass on to the seven churches in Asia. He reminded them that He is God, that He has always existed and always will exist. He reminded them that He had triumphed over death when He arose from the grave, and that He has the power over death, so they should not fear death anymore. Jesus continued on to tell that He had a message for each church that John was to write down and send to them.

This was a very encouraging message, yet it should make the believers of the churches then, and of all churches now stop to consider their hearts. Jesus will return to earth once again, and we don't know when. When He returns, He expects the church to be pure and holy, and be ready to meet Christ when He comes.



Lesson Questions

Who does Jesus give His revelation to in today's lesson?

Jesus gave the revelation to His disciple John who would give it to the churches.

What message did John give to the seven churches?

John told the churches that Jesus is still in control of all that happens, that Jesus loves them and that one day Christ will take the believers to heaven to live forever.

Why was this an important message for the churches?

The people in the churches were being hurt because of their faith at this time and this message was very encouraging to them.

What did John see when he turned to hear the voice speaking to him?

John saw Jesus. Around Jesus were seven lamps and there were seven stars in His hand. Jesus' hair was white like wool and his voice was like the sound of rushing water. His eyes were like fire and His feet were like bronze. Out of His mouth came a sword.

What did Jesus say that He has the power over?

Jesus has the power over death.

Presentation Ideas



Lesson Props

During the lesson use the following props to illustrate aspects of the lesson. (Many of these props represent what John saw in his vision of the Son of Man.)

Wool (The Son of Man's hair)

A piece of bronze (The Son of Man's feet)

A golden sash

A recording of rushing water

A sword

A picture of a star

A lampstand (the churches)

Use a map of Asia to point out the various cities where the revelation of Jesus Christ was to be sent. While looking at the map, the students should be able to see how God so strategically designed the message to be sent.

To illustrate different aspects of Jesus' relationship with believers use the following props.

He loves believers—heart

He has freed believers—cross

He has made believers kings and priests—crown or group of people

To illustrate different aspects of Jesus' character use the following props.

Jesus is the first and the last—the letters A and Z

Jesus is the living one who was dead and is alive forever more—empty tomb

Jesus holds the keys to death—keys



5

Write What You See

In today's lesson John was instructed to write what he saw to share it with others. Give each student a sheet of paper and crayons. Present some of the props from today's lesson to the students, instruct them to block off the sheet for how many items are presented and have them begin to draw each item. Use the drawings later in the lesson for the students to reference.



Where Were the Churches?

Bring in a large map or overhead of a map to class of the region where the seven churches were located in today's lesson. The church's locations could be located and identified with an icon such as a small church sticker.

Praise and Worship

Crown Him

Father, I Adore You

Holy, Holy, Holy Is The Lord Of Hosts

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Create a Book

Have your students create a book containing the objects that John was told to write about. It may be necessary to cut out the needed objects for the students to glue onto the prepared book pages. Using the pictures John used to describe Jesus, have the students paste, trace or draw the objects such as a sword, sun, waterfall, belt, white wool, stars, and keys onto the pages.



Never-Ending Cycle

Materials: copies of "Never-Ending Cycle" craft pages, scissors, tape, crayons, glue
Directions: First, have students color the words of the verse. Then, cut out the two boxes. Fold each piece along the dotted line. Use a glue stick to put a little glue inside the folds. Match and attach the ends of each strip with tape, making sure to twist it once so that the entire verse is read. When attached correctly, the strip keeps going on and on!



"Alpha and Omega"

Materials: copies of "Alpha and Omega" craft page, crayons

Directions: While teaching about who Jesus is describe Jesus' character qualities (ie. that He is the Alpha and Omega.) Give the students the "Alpha and Omega" craft page. Have them recite the alphabet and ask them what the first letter of the alphabet is. Then ask them what the last letter is. Explain that where the New Testament was written they spoke a language called Greek and the Alpha is the first letter of Greek and the Omega is the last. Have them color in the letters.



Encouragement Game 2

In today's lesson the students heard a message that Jesus gave to John to give to the seven churches. Discuss with the student how encouraging these words would have been to the believers who were being persecuted at this time. Instruct the students to sit in a circle and bounce a ball from one side of the circle to a student on the other. Everyone must receive the ball before any student can have a second turn. Each time a student receives the ball the student who bounced it must give them words of eternal encouragement. Examples of eternal encouragement could be, "Jesus is coming soon," or "God will reward His faithful servants." Depending on the ages of the students they may need prompting from the teachers or the level of encouragement may need to be simplified. Play until all students have been given a word of eternal encouragement.



The Glorified Christ

Materials: cotton balls, gold glitter, yellow glitter, crayons

Procedure: Using the craft sheet of the glorified Christ, instruct the students to decorate Christ as described in the text of Revelation 1:14–16. The students should color the coloring sheet then decorate by using cotton balls for Christ's hair, gold glitter for the lampstands, and yellow glitter for the rays of light coming from Christ.



Eagerly Wait

The message from today's lesson would have been of great encouragement for the believers at this time. It can be also a source of distress for unbelievers. Discuss with the students why the church (and believers) would be very encouraged and eagerly await the coming of Jesus. Also discuss why some people would not eagerly await Christ's return. Ask the students if they are eagerly awaiting Jesus' return or not.



Share What You've Learned

Like John was given instructions to share what he saw, encourage the students to take what they have learned this week to their family and friends. The students can use items such as the book that they created, their coloring sheets or another craft, to re-teach the lesson to others.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

"Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades."

—*Revelation 1:17b–18*

Neverending Cycle

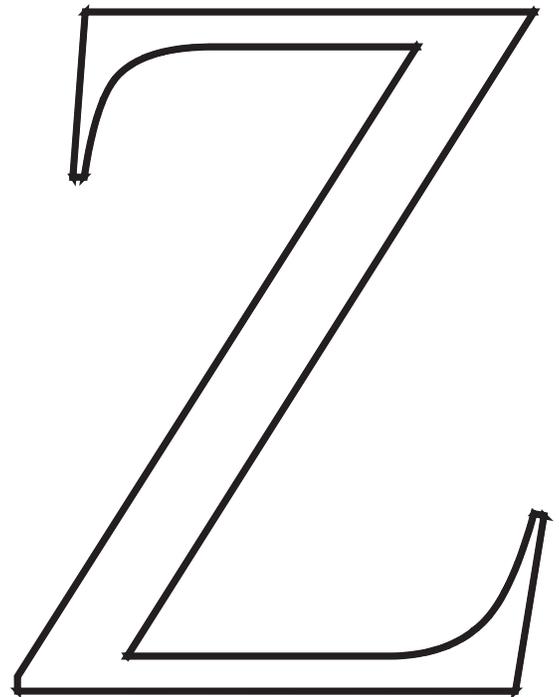
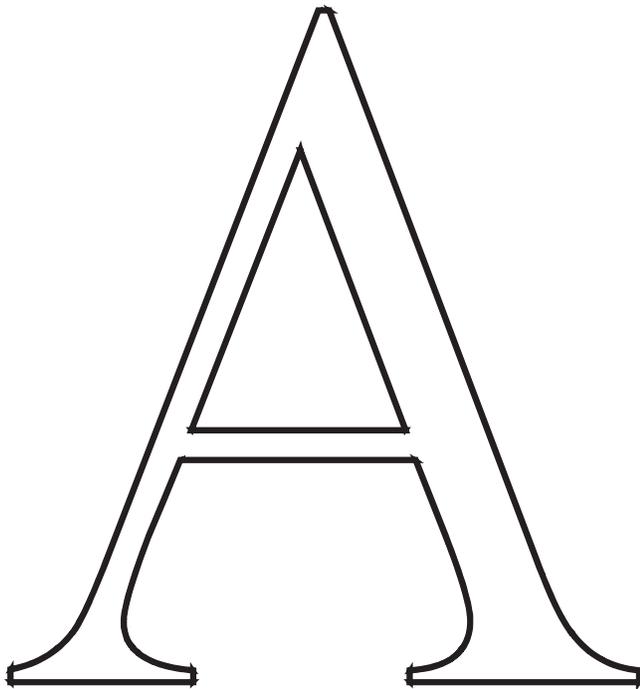
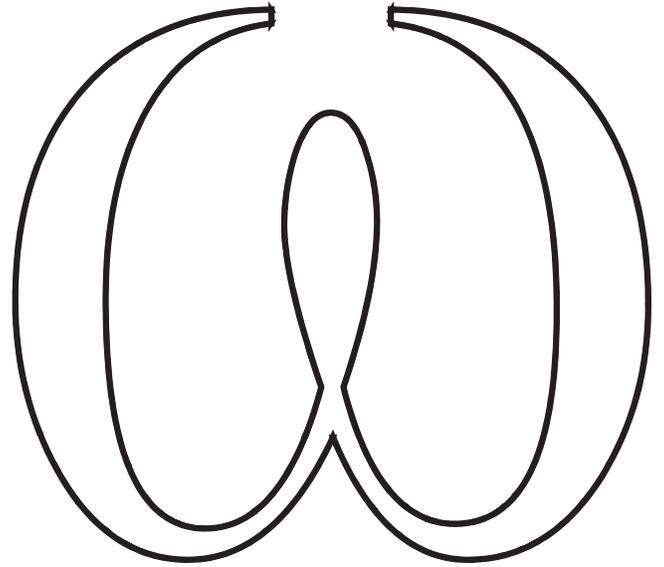
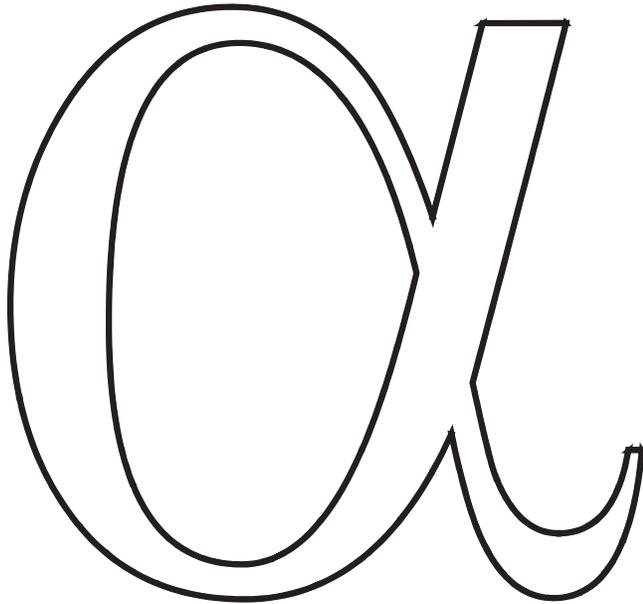
Who was and who is to come,

'I am the Alpha and the Omega,'

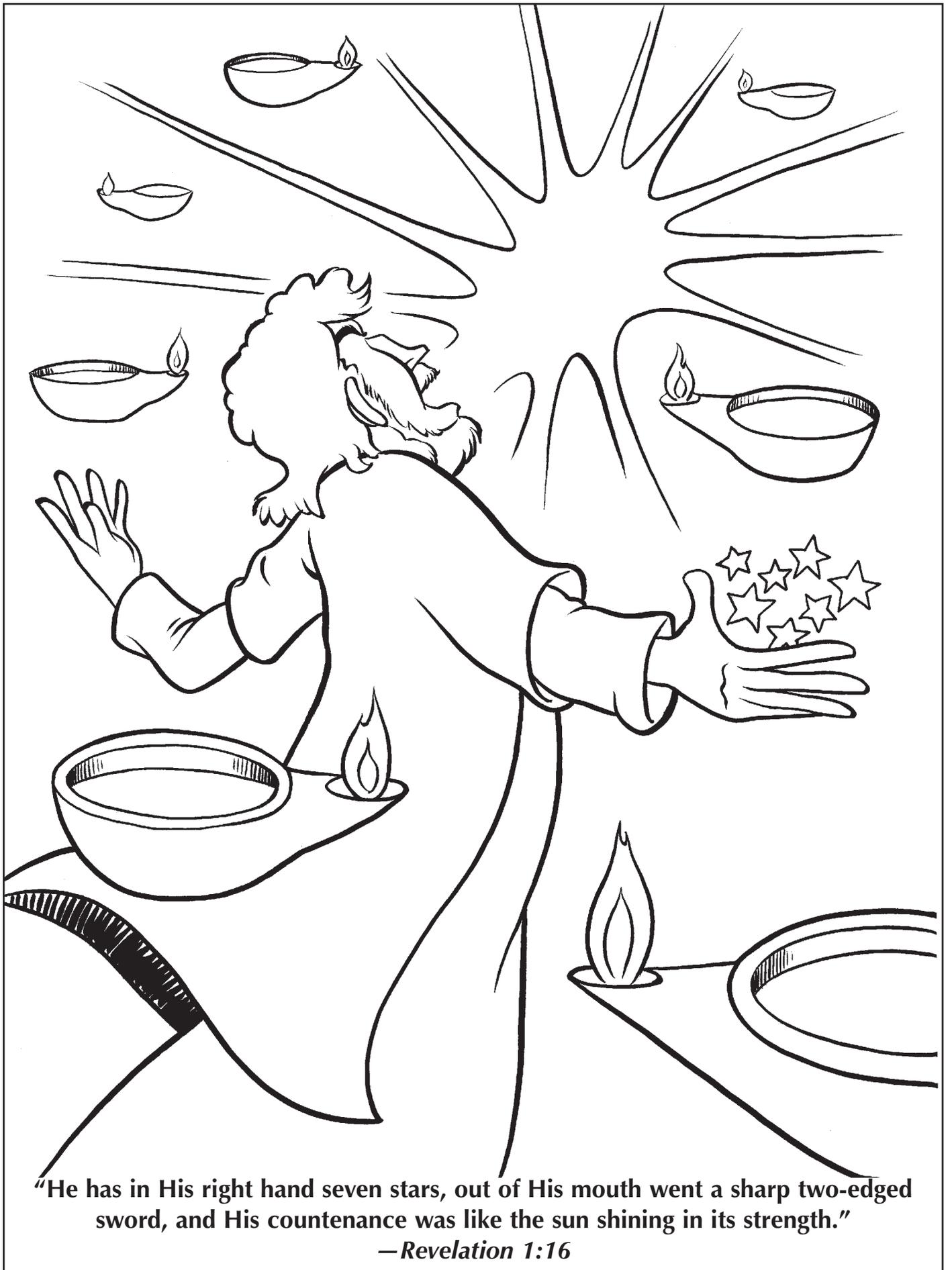
the Almighty.'" —Revelation 1:8

says the Lord, 'who is and

Alpha and Omega

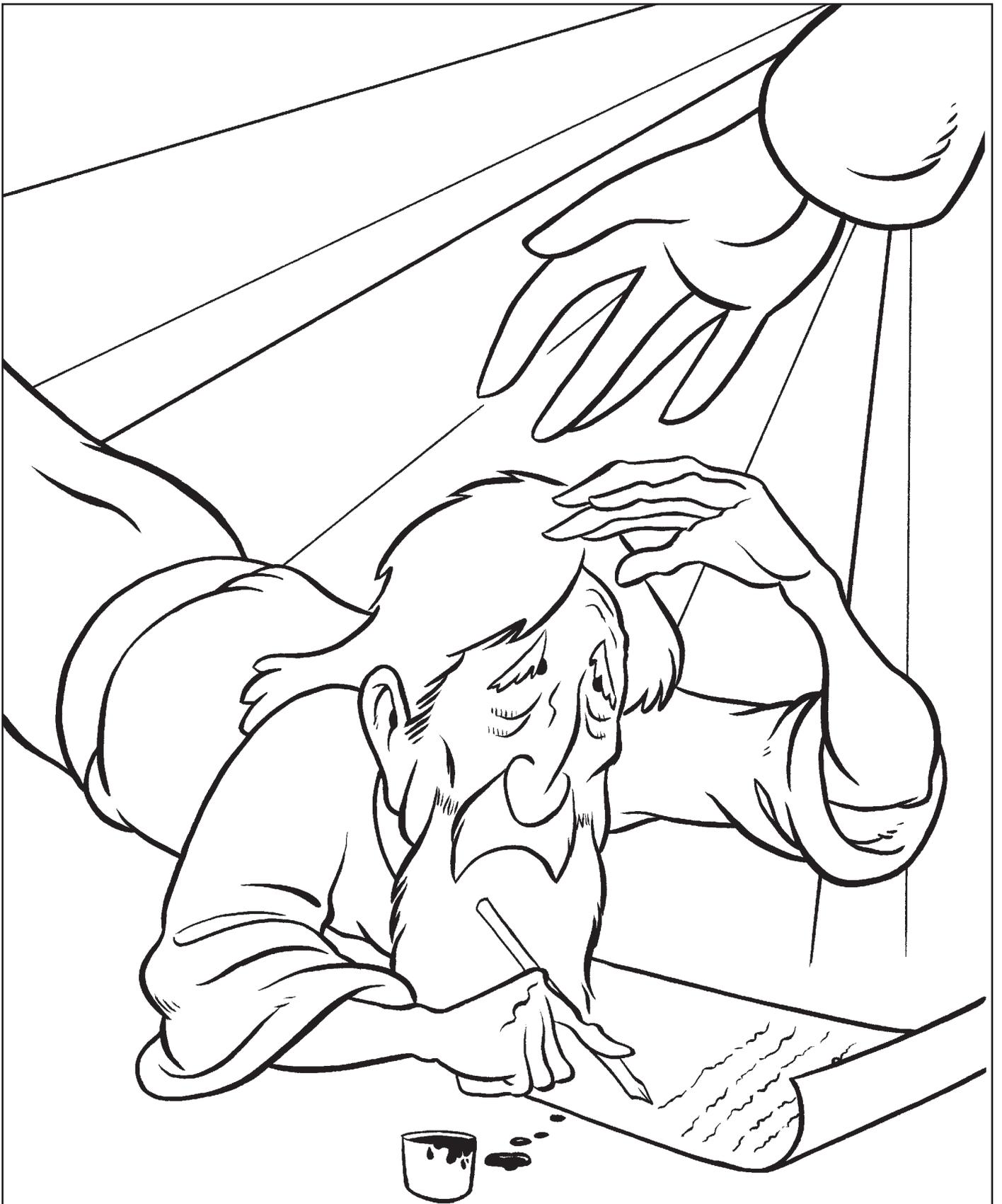


**"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord,
'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'"
—Revelation 1:8**



"He has in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength."

—Revelation 1:16



**“Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are,
and the things which will take place after this.”**

—Revelation 1:19

