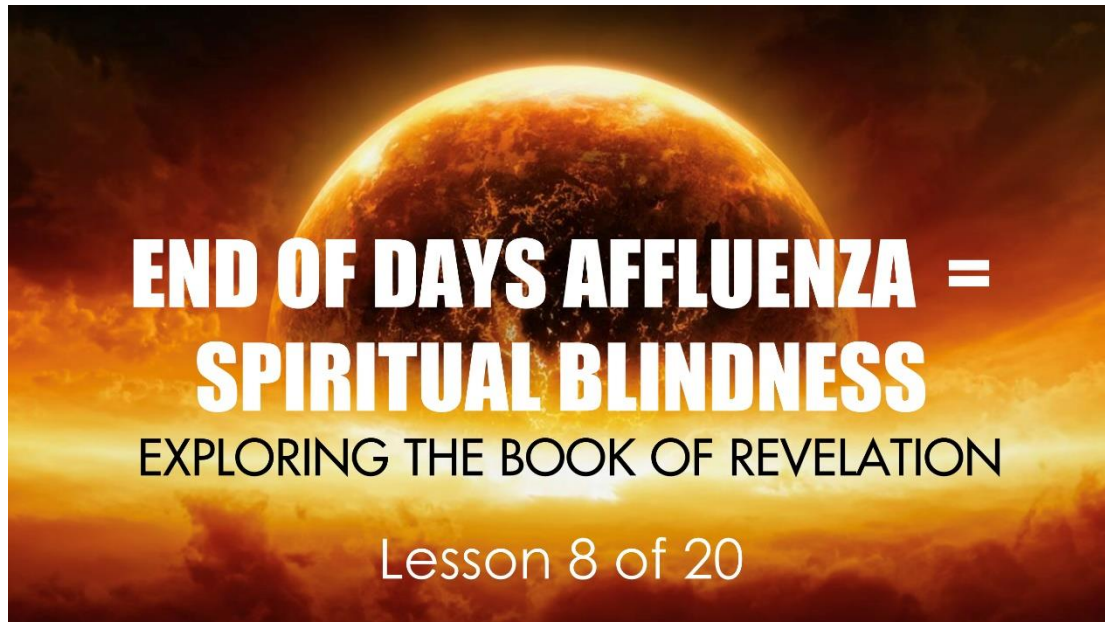


# Avoiding End Of Days Spiritual Blindness

2020Rev-08



Welcome to our eighth class going through the book of Revelation. As we study. Specifically, in this hour, Revelation 3:14 to 22. Before we jump into that text, I want to give you the context.

- That is, that Revelation is the only book that Jesus Christ wrote to every one of us alive today.
- It's to His servants who are living in the end of days and that's us.
- The outline of the book that we're following in this course is just the flow, as it's written.
- The first three chapters are written to us the church on Earth, showing where we're headed. That as each believer dies the Lord calls them home. They join all of those that are around the throne.

In fact, yesterday it was Easter Sunday. Do you know what I thought about? There were more people worshiping Jesus Christ, this Easter Sunday than anyone in history. Do you understand that there are more people now surrounding the throne and we joined them. So that number in Heaven is always going up and of course, all of us here on Earth are right now worshiping Him.

- So, we go to the church in Heaven, we'll get there before long.
- Then the tribulation, the best-known part of Revelation.
- The second coming of Jesus Christ in chapter 19.
- The millennial rule of Christ.
- The culmination of human history with the great white throne.
- Then dwelling in Heaven.

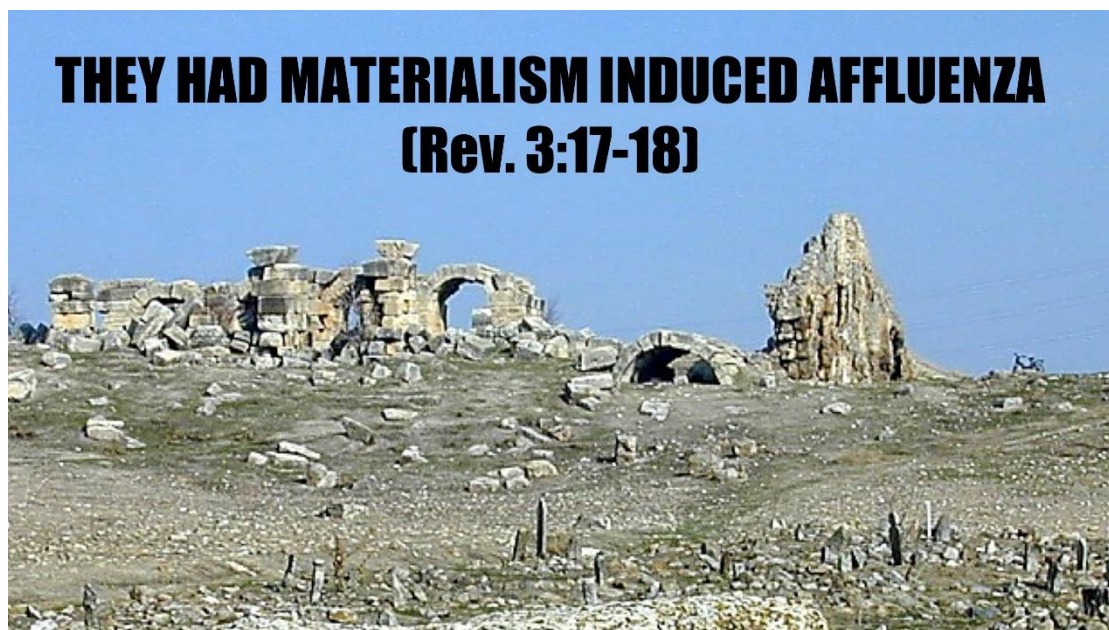
Revelation, and we're going to be in chapter 3:14 to 22, it's the only part of the scripture that Jesus wrote to all of us today, the rest He sent through His apostles. This letter we're reading today was written by Jesus Christ Himself. It's the final church, the church in Laodicea. It's more than a geographic place. It's also talking about types of believers as we'll see today, all the types, the ages of the church throughout all history.

Chapter 3, and I'm going to read starting in verse 14: *"to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God. 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.'"*

Wow. Before we pray, Jesus said avoid affluenza. It makes me sick. Materialism blinds Christians so much so, Jesus said: "I will vomit you out of my mouth".

Let's bow for a word of prayer.

Father, I pray that you would open our eyes to behold wonderful things from your word. And I pray that the message that our Lord Jesus, our Savior, our Master gives to us, we will hear today. In Jesus' name, Amen.



What is materialism? What is affluenza? I bet you can see the English word effluence. Affluenza is like influenza. It's getting infected with materialism. By the way, materialism is not being wealthy.

- It's wanting things.
- It is finding your joy in things.
- In things that money can buy.
- In things that you do because you were wealthy,
- or act because,
- or wear,

- or have because you're wealthy.

What Jesus says is, this is the way you know that you're infected with affluenza. Verse 17 of chapter 3, *"because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.' "* It's like self-sufficiency. *"And do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."*

Materialism blinds us to our true spiritual condition. Materialism fills our lives with everything else except what pleases God. The pursuit of things.

So, we see in the scriptures, they had materialism induced affluenza. What that means is that they were at the point of spiritual blindness and that's the eighth lesson in our study today.



Today's affluenza produces spiritual blindness and spiritual blindness is the danger.



Now, see this chart here. I remind you. I show it every class. It's an overview of church history from the cross of Christ to His coming back to visit the churches in the second generation. Jesus comes back to see His church on Earth.

In the first three chapters, He makes seven geographic stops. Those seven stops are literal congregations.

There were really people in Ephesus. There were really people in Smyrna, and Pergamos, and Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. We've come here, we've come to the final church. So, the final church is not only a geographic location, it's also a type of believer. There are affluenza infected, materialistically, blinded people in every church of all history.

- Now there are also those that are really serving the Lord, but the Lord's crowded in their lives.
- There are people suffering.
- There are people that are getting comfortable around sin.
- There are people that are infected with sin.
- There are people that don't even act like Christians.
- There are people that are doing everything Jesus wants.

This last one is also a picture of where we've gotten to in the end of days. I really believe that Laodicean's characterize the 21st century church.





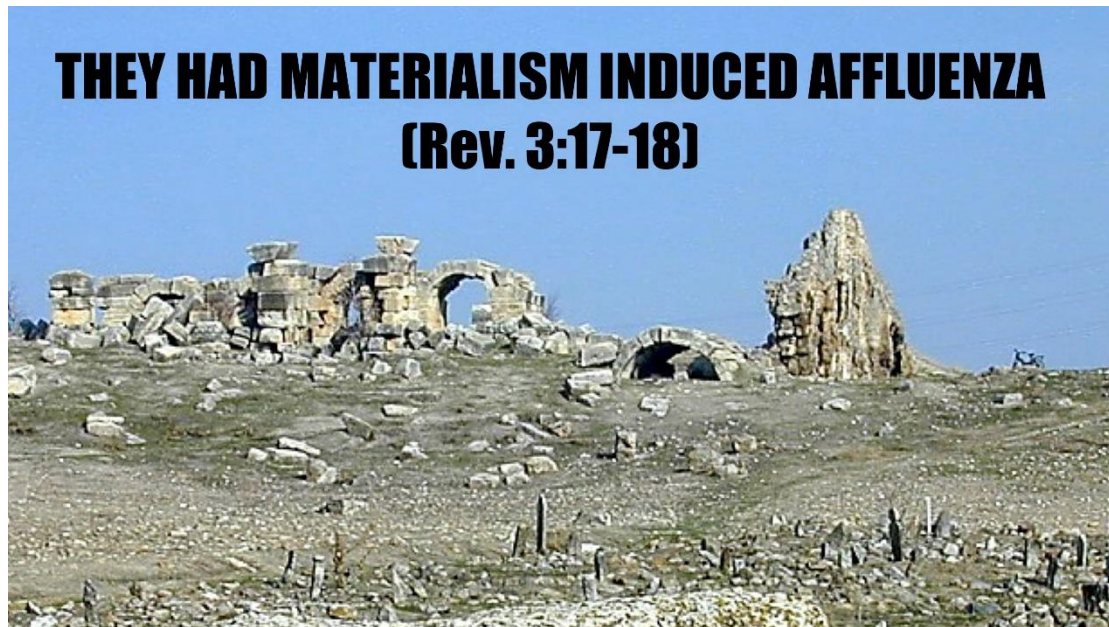
This church, I remind you by looking at this map is the final one going around the face of a clock. From nine o'clock at Ephesus. 10 o'clock at Smyrna. About noon Pergamos. Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia. Now, we're at Laodicea, about 5:00 PM on the clock face. Literal churches in the epicenter of the Roman empire.



Jesus actually, when He visited His church on Earth, these seven, He gives a medical report and I have that for you right there on the slide.

- They had heart problems in Ephesus. Their arteries were clogged with things other than Christ.
- Smyrna, He said don't fear.
- Pergamos had immunity problems. They were so much in Satan's seat they were overexposed to sin.
- The Thyatiran's not only were exposed, they were infected.

- The people of Sardis had heart arrest, cardiac arrest, they had heart attacks. They didn't even look alive.
- As we saw last hour, the people of Philadelphia were totally healthy. Jesus came out, did the run of all their vitals. He did all the blood work and everything. He said, you are operating exactly the way that I want my church to operate.
- The last church, Laodicea, spiritually blind and distracted. They had, as I shared at the beginning, materialism induced affluenza.



I read an article recently in the New York Times that talked about a group of Japanese gypsies. Now you don't usually equate the Roman people, gypsies, with Japanese people. What they were talking about is, there's a group of Japanese that are going back into the radioactive zone of the Fukushima reactor. A meltdown, which irradiated an area. Made it uninhabitable. In fact, in the early days, the radiation was so hot that it was destroying even the remote vehicles that they were sending in, radio controlled. They were burning them up. It's cooled down a little bit. So, there is a group of people who would go in for a half hour a week, maybe an hour the next week, and scavenge among all the buildings that were abandoned.

People left everything behind. They left their watch on the table. They left their wallet in their pants. They fled for their lives. So, there's a lot to get there and so this group of people have cut their way through the fence and they scavenged. They only go in for a little while.

What's interesting is people started saying, and people knew who they are because they bring out stuff and sell it, and everyone said, wow, they look so healthy. Let me read to you what the New York Times said. They'd go in a half hour one week, an hour the next week and the doctors are finding that even though they appear to be absolutely healthy on the outside because of exposing themselves to have such high levels of radiation, they're dying from the inside out.

The radiation levels, even with a once in a while exposure, ate away at the marrow of their bones. Shriveling up their production of blood cells. It's only a matter of time till all of them die. When Jesus visits the seventh church Laodicea, He found an equally dangerous condition, the Laodicean's weren't just going into the radiation zone once a week. They lived there.

They were so consumed with the acquisition of stuff that they had come to the place where they were materialism blinded. They had caught affluenza. Materialism doesn't sound at all that dangerous to us here in America. It's not one of the overtly repulsive sins, it is one of the acceptable ones. In fact, we even treat it as a virtue, both here in America, as they did at Laodicea. Jesus said materialism shrivels our bones. As John records, God says in 1 John chapter 2, this is what the Lord said; *"love not the world."*

What is loving the world? It's living for material things, material pleasures, material goals of life. In fact, the Lord says that our goals of life should not all have to do with money. It should have to do with, what seeking first the kingdom of God would do.

Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I **counsel you to buy from Me** gold refined in the fire."

This is Jesus. What He says, if you look at chapter 3 and verse 17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' - and do not know that you're wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked - I counsel"*, Jesus for each of these churches is saying, if you have ears to hear, listen to me. *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire,"*.

Real quickly. Let me give you a thumbnail, a tour guide if you're going to visit Laodicea in the first century. If you would go to Laodicea in the first century, there are three things that the Laodicean's had.

1. Number one, it was a fashion center.
2. Number two, it was a medical hotspot of the ancient world, a hub.
3. Finally, it was a banking zone. it was known for gold mining, gold manufacturing, gold storage. So gold was big.



It was like the Mayo Clinic of the ancient world only ophthalmologically. It was a place of eyecare.

Then of course, it was a fashion center. Why? They raised herds of sheep in Laodicea that were unique in nature. They were black. They produced black silky wool. That wool was fashionable because it was so expensive. If you wanted to wear clothes that stood out, you'd go to Laodicea and buy this black wool.

If you had any trouble and most people did have trouble, with their eyes. Think about riding or walking or traveling along dusty Roman roads. Most people were walking through dust everywhere they went. Dust gets in your eyes and first your eyes water and you blink. Then all of a sudden you start developing eye sickness. There was an ointment that doctors had discovered and had made and produced and sold and treated people in a hospital just for your eyes.

Now, wait a minute. What you wear, how you see and look back. *"and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked."* Blind. Naked. Poor. Jesus used everything about the literal geographic place to communicate to these people. He said every one of you know how everybody's:

- after the fashion of Laodicea,
- after the eye salve of Laodicea,
- after the gold and the banking and the wealth.

You are loving the things of the world and seeking to have the best the world offers, but you are blind to me.



What's one of the biggest blinders? Turn in your Bible, as you see right there on the slide, Ecclesiastes 5. Now, for some of you, maybe you're new; I'm getting so many notes from those of you that are watching this online and one of you told me you're a brand-new Christian. So, this is how you find Ecclesiastics. You open right to the middle of your Bible like



this, and right in the middle is Psalms. Then you go to the right Proverbs and the next book is Ecclesiastes. So, there you are, Ecclesiastes chapter 5.

What I'd like to give you is what the world's richest man said about the dangers of materialism. The richest man in the world more than the other person, his name was Solomon, and he had the world at his feet.

- People came from all over the world to see him,
- to pay homage to him,
- to give him gifts because he was unsurpassed in education and knowledge and wealth.
- He had it all.
- He was the wisest man and the richest man at the same time on Earth.
- It was all because of God's blessing. God gave him his wish for wisdom.
- No one compared to Solomon before or after, other than the Lord Jesus Christ who is wisdom incarnate. Among humans of all born on this Earth, Solomon was unstoppable.
- He was unbridled in his ability to pursue knowledge, but he was more unbridled in his pursuit of pleasure. If he wanted something, he could have it. He set out to discover the best way to live and he did it, then he wrote about it.
- In fact, nobody compared to Solomon as a possessor of uncountable wealth.

I'll just read to you what the Bible says. If we take the time to count, what it says in 2 Samuel, David the King left an inheritance to his son, Solomon that the Bible says is 5,000 tons of gold. Wow. That's 160 million ounces of gold.

Recently gold went past \$1300. In fact, I think with all that's going on with the virus and everything, it's like a \$1500 or \$1600, but before the virus, it was at about \$1300. Do you know how much that is? That's \$280 billion from dad. That was just the gold, that wasn't the real estate. That wasn't the King and all the people and all the subjects, that was just his gold.

Then it said that he gave him approximately, the silver, about \$32 billion. That was a million talents, that is 60 million pounds of silver. So, when Solomon writes a treatise on the danger of wealth, he knows what he's talking about.

By the way, in the picture... you all recognize that, right? That's Downton Abbey, that's Lord Carnarvon's great home out in the English countryside. Here's what Solomon says. Starting in chapter 5 of Ecclesiastes verse 10, "*he who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver;*" Ecclesiastes 5:10, "*nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.*"

# **Lesson-1: The more stuff we accumulate, the more stuff we will want.**

"He who loves silver will not be satisfied  
with silver;" (v. 10a).

Lesson number one. **The more you have, the more you want.** That's easily seen. One of the first billionaires we know of, his name was John D. Rockefeller, he had a famous saying. Someone said, what would you like John Rockefeller? He said, "just one more dollar." He already had more dollars than he could count. He was the first billionaire. All he wants is one more. God said it 3000 years ago. The more you have, the more you want.

# **Lesson-2: The more stuff we grasp on to, the less satisfied we become.**

"Nor he who loves abundance, with  
increase. This also is vanity." (v. 10b).

Next slide. Look at the second half of this verse, "*nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity.*"

**The more you have, the less you're satisfied.** Have you ever noticed that people; the more they have, the more they look for something else because they don't even want what they have. There is this relationship, this reciprocity between: how much you have and how much you want, and how much you have and how satisfied you are with what you have.

Some of the happiest people in the world are the people who have nothing. How do I know that? Ask anybody that's gone on a mission's trip. I've been in so many parts of the world, where the people live with dirt floors. They live in hammocks. They live with nothing. Yet they seem to smile all day long. They don't have any electronic gizmos in their pockets. They don't even have a watch on their arm. They just are smiling and happy. They go about their lives, and hum, and sing, and smile.

Now, not everybody's like that, but go on a mission's trip sometime and see how grateful people are who have nothing. The more stuff we grasp onto, the less satisfied we become.

## **Lesson-3: The more stuff we own, the more stuff everyone tries to get from us.**

**"When goods increase, They increase who eat them; " (v.11a).**

The third lesson Solomon gives us is in verse 11. "*When goods increase, They increase who eat the;*" Wow. You know what that means?

**The more stuff we own, the more stuff everybody tries to get from us.** Ask anybody that wins the lottery. I love reading the biographies of the people that win the super max, whatever it's called, lottery. They have relatives they never knew existed, suddenly come out of the woodwork and they want a piece. I've talked to doctors who say, somebody always wants something from them because they assume because they're a doctor, they're rich. The more you have, the more stuff everybody tries to get from you, including the government. They want to take it away from you.

# Lesson-4: The more stuff we pile up, the less of it we can really use.

"So what profit have the owners except to see them with their eyes?" (v. 11b).

Fourth lesson from Solomon. It's the second part of verse 11. *"So what profit have the owners, Except they see them with their eyes?"*

What's this talking about? **The more stuff we pile up, the less we can really use it.** Think about it. The next danger is the more you have, the less you get to use it. People can't even park in their garages anymore. One of the funnest things to do, is drive down the street and watch people coming home. When they open their door to their garage, they can't get the car in there. Their garages are so full of stuff. They can't even see what stuff they have. They never get to use it. When the garage gets full, you go out and buy storage space to hold more stuff. The more you have, the less you use it. You store it and you never see it again. You don't even think about it, except for once a month when you have to pay for the storage facility. What's really sad about this fact is that we hardly get to enjoy what we have because we store it and we're afraid someone's going to get it. We need a security system to protect it. The more stuff we pile up, the less of it we can really use.



## **Lesson-5: The more stuff we build up, the more we worry about our stuff.**

"The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, Whether he eats little or much; But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep." (v. 12).

Solomon also says in verse 12, *"The sleep of the laboring man is sweet, whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep."*

**The more stuff we build up, the more stuff we have to worry about.** The more you wonder if someone's breaking into that auxiliary place, where you keep your stuff or into your home. So, you install a better security system or buy a safe. We're getting insurance on everything that they sell insurance for. There's no way to protect your stuff from worry.

It's the care of things, Jesus said that quenches our spiritual lives. If you work for your food, if you eat it and sleep, you sleep well. But when you have too much stuff, you can't sleep because you worry about it?

## **Lesson-6: The more stuff we hold tightly, the more we get injured from holding onto it.**

"There is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt." (v. 13).

The sixth lessons Solomon gives us this in verse 13, he said, *"there's is a severe evil which I have seen under the sun: Riches kept for their owner to his hurt."*

**The more stuff we hold onto tightly, the more we get injured when death has to pry it from our hands.** Think about that. I've seen this happen. It's evident to your family you care more about your stuff than you care about them. You care more about the promotion, the better job, the bigger office, the bigger paycheck. You spend all your time on getting more stuff. You never show up for anything. Then laying in your deathbed, you realized you spent your life for everything except what mattered, your family that you never had time to spend with. The sixth danger of wealth is the more you have, the more you can hurt yourself by holding tightly to it.

## **Lesson-7: The more stuff we keep, the more stuff we can lose.**

**"But those riches perish through misfortune;" (v.14a).**

The last thing that Solomons says, in this 14th verse it says, *" but those riches perish through misfortune; when he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came;"*

What does that say? **The more stuff we keep, the more stuff we can lose.** What does that mean? William Borden. If you live anywhere in the Eastern Seaboard of the United States, there's Borden Dairy. You see it in every supermarket. He was the heir. His parents were giving him the business. He went to a meeting as he was going to school, an Ivy league school. Heard a speaker. Actually, respond to the message. Got saved. Realized that he had a choice before him to manage this empire of dairy or do something for the Lord. He chose to go to China.

He actually sailed for China. On the way to go to China, to share the gospel in the Mediterranean, he stopped in Egypt. He had been there before. When he became a missionary, he decided that he was going to learn the language of the Arabic people so that if any Arabic people were in China, he could minister to them.

While in Egypt, he contracted cerebral meningitis and died in one month. He never made it to China. He never reached the mission field. He never became a missionary after all that preparation. After leaving everything behind, he died. His mother made it just hours after he died, hearing he had been sick. She'd sailed right away. Very wealthy. Came in a steamship.

Next to his bed was his Bible. She opened his Bible and in the flyleaf in the front part of his Bible, this is what he wrote. No reserves. No retreat. And just before he died in various halting handwriting, he wrote, no regret. He never got to the mission field, but he lived a life of maximum dedication to Christ, and that's what he was to the end. No regrets. What a way to end. By the way, when his Memorial service was held, hundreds of students responded to take William Borden's place and flooded to the mission fields.

## **Lesson-8: The more stuff we clutch, the more stuff we must leave behind.**

"When he begets a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, To go as he came; And he shall take nothing from his labor Which he may carry away in his hand."  
(v.15).

Last lesson from Solomon is verse 15. It says, *"he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand."*

**The more stuff we clutch, the more we have to leave behind.** It's amazing that when you go through the country on back roads, you'll see this all the time. You'll see a U-Haul parked in front of an old rundown house. You'll see a pile of trash in front of that house. You'll see the table of a garage sale starting, and you'll see the family with carefully wrapped items, putting them in the U-Haul. What is that? Grandma and grandpa died. Most of their stuff was trash. Some of this stuff can be sold. The treasures, the kids get. They left it all behind.

Do you know what the Lord said? Avoid spending your life living for things that you have to leave behind. That will cause great pain. Everybody's trying to get them. Keep you from sleeping. It will cause spiritual blindness.

# Salvation Brings: The Gift of Spiritual Sight

Acts 26:18

What is that? It's neglecting what we got at salvation. Salvation brings the gift of spiritual sight, Acts 26:18. Now, let me just go through this list real quickly. Acts 26:18. One of my favorite verses describes what happens at the instant of salvation. You can see seven things there, right there on your screen.

## **Jesus Explains the Work of Salvation in Acts 26:18:**

to **open their eyes**, in order  
to **turn them from darkness** to light,  
and **from the power** of Satan to God,  
that they may **receive forgiveness** of sins  
and **an inheritance**  
among those who are **sanctified**  
**by faith** in Me.' (NKJV)

- Number one, open their eyes, At the instant of salvation, spiritually God opens our eyes. What does that mean? We start understanding the Bible.
- Number two, we turned from darkness to light.
- Number three, we turned from the power of Satan to God. We receive forgiveness of sins.
- Number four, we have an inheritance in Heaven.
- We are sanctified.
- And we have faith.



What is that? It's a gift. Remember, the apostles said, Lord increase our faith. So, at the instant of salvation:

- Jesus gives us everything we need.
- He lets us see.
- We no longer love darkness.
- We want the light.
- We're set free from Satan's power.
- We know we're forever forgiven.
- We have our eternal inheritance in Heaven.
- We want to be useful to him.
- We're growing in faith.

That's salvation.

What happens materialism, slowly undoes the work of salvation. It blinds us to seeing Christ. It blinds us to knowing our inheritances in Heaven. It keeps us from actually seeing Christ in His word.



I'd like to tell you a quick story about someone who was blind and then the Lord opened their eyes. It's one of those fascinating stories that I've heard. In fact, I can't stop telling people about this. Actually, it came from someone watching just like you. They were on YouTube. They told me that they are 60 years old. They live in London. They were traveling on the subway. In fact, the slide says a 60 year old weekender on the London tube or subway.

I was trying to read about what a weekender was. Finally, I found out, this is a person that lived for concerts and they were 60 years old. So, they'd been going to concerts for about 45 years in Britain. They had seen, from the Beatles through all the groups, since they had gone to their concerts. They said that they lived the normal life of the weekenders. They'd get as

high as they could. Get as drunk as they could get. This was a woman. She said, she always tried to find the guy that couldn't resist her. She just lived life to the fullest that she could, in sin, every weekend.

She said she was 60 years old, coming home from a concert at 60. She said she felt so empty. So purposeless, that she typed onto her smartphone "hope" and guess what came up? I thank the Lord that somehow the algorithm of Google pulled the YouTube video, Season of Hope. It was a Christmas concert, at Calvary Bible Church, where I served for many years. It was on YouTube and she got that video. She turned her phone and really got into it.

I was talking about hopelessness and only Christ could open your eyes. I said, if you would like hope today, bow your head. She said wearing her earbuds, riding the subway, she bowed her head. Now, nobody watches you on the subway anyway, so she was fine.

I said, and if you really want, hope, raise your hand. She said, she raised her hand on the subway. Now maybe someone noticed that, I don't know. She asked Jesus Christ to do what He promised He would do, riding that subway.

I got that email six months after she was on the subway. She said to me, I want you to know, six months ago, I was riding the subway. Six months ago, I watched that YouTube clip that was a few minutes long about Season of Hope. She said, you said, bow your head. You said, pray. I raised my hand. She said, my life has completely changed in six months.

She said my life, the chronicle of my life was on the wall of my apartment. I had the jacket of the record cover of every album. Then I got down to just papers because they didn't sell albums anymore. She said my life of concert weekending was my wall of my apartment. She said, every time I walked in, I thought of how much I used to enjoy all that and how hopeless I'd gotten until I rode that subway and raised my hand to God. She said that was six months ago.

She said, I just finished taking the last one off the wall and taking it to the trash. She said, I was going to sell them, they were worth a fortune. But she said, I listened to more YouTube videos and found out in Acts 19 that the Christians there burned all the things that reminded them of the devil. So, she said, I couldn't burn anything here in London, so she said, I just put them into the trash dumpster. She said, God opened my eyes.

# Learning How to Focus on God

## Isaiah 33

Did you know, that's what happens the instant of all of our salvation, but you know what we all need to do. Use those new eyes. To do what it says in Isaiah 33 and this is what we're going to close with. Go back to Isaiah and then within Isaiah, find the 33rd chapter.

The 33rd chapter, I call: the lesson from God on how to see God. How to focus on God in life. How to use those eyes that He gave us to truly see Christ and to see Him like Moses.

Do you know what it says about Moses? Moses, in Hebrews 11 says he endured all of the temptations of ease of Egypt because he saw God. He endured the temptations to the treasures of Egypt because he saw the Lord who is invisible.

What does that mean? Let me describe what Isaiah 33 says. It basically talks about how we're doing with our eyes, focusing on the Lord. I was recently getting these glasses; these are my new glasses. When I first got them, I was struggling to see because everything was fuzzy. I had blurred vision. What the doctor found out was that they had not bent this little part properly, and the glasses were sitting too far forward. When I looked at everything, everything looked fuzzy. All I did was go in, and he took them, and he bent them and made them fit. As soon as I looked out, everything was clear. I just needed a little adjustment. What's the little adjustment we need to see clearly? It starts in verse 14 of Isaiah 33, and this is what it says.

# **The Offer to Experience God Continuously**

## **Isaiah 33:14**

God says in Isaiah 33:14. *"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?"*

In other words, what he's saying is how do you experience God continuously? How do you stay around our God, who is a consuming fire? That's what verse 14 is talking about. It's quoted in Hebrews, *"Our God is a consuming fire."* He's called the everlasting burnings. Who can dwell in God's presence? Who can see Him and hear Him?

# **Six Choices to Preserve Healthy Spiritual Sight**

## **Isaiah 33:15**

Starting in verse 15, there are six choices God says we can make to see Him like Moses did. To see Him like the early Christians, the early church did. To see Him like the people in Laodicea used to see Him when they got saved, but materialism blinded them. How do we get to see? How do we preserve our sight?



#1 Isaiah 33:15 “He who walks  
righteously...”

# Cultivate a Lifestyle of Practical Purity

We'll start in with verse 15. It says, "*he who walks righteously*". What is that? That's **cultivating a lifestyle of practical purity**, walking righteously. You know what that is? Following the Lord. When Jesus called His disciples, He called them with two words. Follow me. That's what walking righteously is. He who walks righteously - doesn't mean that I'm perfect, it means I'm following the Lord.

Have you ever told someone to follow you in your car? There are two kinds of people that follow you in the car. The people that actually stay right behind you and follow you. Then the people that pass you or don't pay attention. They get way back and everybody gets between. They don't know where you are. It's a conscious choice to keep that person always before you and you're watching them. That's what the Lord offers to us.

#2 Isaiah 33:15b “...and speaks uprightly...”

# Cultivate a Lifestyle of Speech Under God's Control

Secondly, "*and speaks uprightly*". That's **cultivating a lifestyle of speech that's under God's control**. Do you remember what the Bible says, "*out of the abundance of the heart the*

*mouth speaks*"? Jesus said, did you know you can tell what's on someone's mind by just listening to them?

When I counsel couples, usually a young man tells me there's a young lady their interested in, or vice versa. They say, what would you do? I said, just be around them for a while and listen to them when they're with their friends. Listen to what comes out when they're having fun and talking. When they don't even know that anybody's paying attention and really scrutinizing their life. Out of the abundance of their heart, their mouth will speak. God says cultivate a lifestyle of speech under my control.

### #3 Isaiah 33:15c

“...He who despises the gain of oppressions...”

# Cultivate a Lifestyle of Compassion

Look at the third part of chapter 33 of Isaiah, verse 15, *"He who despises the gain of oppressions"*.

What is that? **A lifestyle of compassion.** Every one of us are just blitzed with the news, with watching television, of seeing the world around us. We see hardship. We see death and destruction. Last night, I read this morning, that the tornadoes that had swept the South killed 19 people. I was just flipping through the pictures. All these destroyed trailers and everything else. It says 19 people died between, from Mississippi and South Carolina. You know what? I went right from that, to the latest word on the federal reserve. You know what happens? We get desensitized. We've seen so many disasters. Heard about so many murders. Had seen so much evil portrayed on television and gaming that: we're no longer compassionate.

Do you know what compassion is? It's Christ's most frequent emotion. When the gospels were written there are 89 chapters that describe Christ's life on Earth. If you read all 89 in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John you'll find one emotion is most frequent in Christ's life: compassion. Actually, the word interesting. Splanchno means he's moved, it's like visceral. It's feeling it in your stomach. Cultivate a life of compassion.

By the way, how do you do that? It says in Colossians 3, you put on compassion. Compassion is a choice. It's like your clothes; this shirt, this morning. My wife knows I'd wear the same

thing every day and so she has to hide my favorite and leave out things I haven't worn yet. Then I'll wear it. So, this shirt was hanging there on a little hook and I chose to put it on. That's what compassion is like.

#### #4 Isaiah 33:15d

“...Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes...”

## Cultivate a Lifestyle of Honesty

Number four, look at what it says in verse 15, right at the end. *"Who gestures with his hand, refusing bribes."* That's **cultivating a lifestyle of honesty, especially financial honesty**. There's a lot of financial dishonesty in our world.

#### #5 Isaiah 33:15e

“... Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,...”

## Cultivate a Lifestyle of Only Listening To Things God Calls PURE

And it says in verse 15, *"who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed"*. That's **cultivating a lifestyle of only listening to things God calls pure**. Did you know that God has something against us being entertained with bloodshed? He says that gratuitous violence slowly erodes our compassion, our sensitivity, our love. Number five, cultivate a lifestyle of only listening to things God calls pure.

#6 Isaiah 33:15f

“... And shuts his eyes from seeing evil...”

# **Cultivate a Lifestyle of Only Looking At Things God Calls PURE**

Here's the last one in verse 15 *"and shuts his eyes from seeing evil"*. **Cultivate a lifestyle of only choosing to look at things that God calls pure.**

# **Six Indescribable Joys of Seeing God**

## **Isaiah 33:16-17**

What does the Lord promise if we'll do that? Starting in verse 16, on the slide you see there are six indescribable joys of seeing God. Six joys. Here they are:

1. Isaiah 33:16-17 He will dwell on high; **[Endless delights]**
2. His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks; **[True security]**
3. Bread will be given him, **[Satisfied longings]**
4. His water will be sure. **[Unending refreshment]**
5. v. 17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty;  
**[The Greatest Attraction]**
6. They will see the land that is very far off. **[Heavenward gaze]**

Number one, it says in verse 16, "*He will dwell on high;*" That's, **endless delights**. It's almost unbelievable what God offers to us. Seeing life through the window of His word, we will dwell on high. We know what's coming ahead in the world. We are not afraid of the tribulation, of the second coming. Of all these things, we know, are God's plan. He said, you'll dwell on high. You'll have endless delights.

Secondly, He says, "*his place of defense will be the fortress of rocks;*" We will **have true security**. Did you know that? The righteous are as bold as a lion. That's what it says in God's word. But the wicked, they run when no one is pursuing them. What has God offered to us? True security, endless delights.

How about this, "*bread will be given him.*" Now who's speaking in Isaiah 33:16. Isaiah is writing down what God said. God says I will feed you. I'll **satisfy your longings**. Unsatisfied longings is the description of most of the people wandering around this world. Endlessly looking for a thrill. God says, I'll satisfy your longings.

I'll give you water that's sure. That's the next part of verse 16. That's **unending refreshment**. That's what Jesus said. Remember in chapter 7 of the gospel by John, Jesus said; when I move in, out of you will flow rivers of life, living water. I like to think of a fire hydrant in the summer, like in New York City, when the fireman cranks it and lets the water spray. It just sprays all over and it makes everybody happy and refreshed. That's what our lives are supposed to be like. The Holy spirit is supposed to fill me. The one who opened my eyes and turned me from darkness to light, that same spirit overflows my life. That's unending refreshment.

Now look at verse 17, "*Your eyes will see the King in His beauty,*"

Then, "*They will see the land that is a very far off.*"

See the goal, the reason that Jesus wrote to us this letter of Revelation, is so that we will see this world is not our home. We're just passing through. This isn't all there is to live for. We

**want to know Christ** and the power of His resurrection. The fact that we have a new heart, the new spirit, we have a **Heavenward gaze**.

Let me read to you, just a second, from my dissertation. I actually spent 10 years of my life working on my doctorate at Dallas Theological Seminary. What I studied for 10 years and what I got my degree in, guess what, it was the book of Revelation. They said, you can get your degree in anything. I said, I want to get my degree in the book of Revelation. The 22 chapters and the 404 verses. So, I wrote a dissertation.

I'll never forget my professor. That dear Dr. John Reed, that was my advisor for a decade. He said to me, you know what's going to happen? Your dissertation? I said, no. He said, it's going to become a book on the six floor, lower-level basement of Dallas Theological Seminary Library, where all the rest of them are. Unless you do something with it.

I said, what should I do? He said, turn your dissertation into a daily devotional. I said, really? So, I would like to read to you from the daily devotional, that a team made out of my dissertation. This is what it is, this section page 168, and the name of the book is Living Hope for the End of Days, is about the church in Laodicea. It's about this and this course right now, it's just an overview of what I spent 10 years studying.

The Laodiceans were wealthy, self-sufficient, fashionable, worldly, and insecure. Then I go on and say, the Laodiceans were spiritually insensitive and today's church by and large is in the same condition. Friends I went to college with told me they don't have Sunday evening church anymore, because the world is running too fast. They can't generate enough excitement to get people to come. We can't generate excitement, but God can. We need to get people excited about reading and studying God's word. And so, in this wealthy, commercial, peace seeking, medically advanced city called Laodicea, Jesus gets their attention.

# **Beware of Self-Induced Spiritual Blindness**

## **2 Peter 1:8-9**

How did he get their attention? He did a diagnosis. He told them, see the slide, beware of self-induced spiritual blindness. Do you remember everything in Revelation is not new.

Where does it say the warning to the Laodiceans? Peter. Let me read to you what Peter wrote, that Jesus was alluding to in Revelation.

He said, *"if these things are yours and abound" 2 Peter 1:8, "you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Peter 1:9, but *"he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins."*

# Choices that Strengthen Our Focus upon God

When we got saved, we were forgiven, and our eyes were opened. But once we forget to see Christ and to focus on God, then we are blind. What are the choices that will get us to focus on God?

1. Make a choice to:  
**Read God's Word before Social Media  
or any online activities each morning.**  
That choice reflects Christ's Words  
in Matthew 6:33 "Seek FIRST the  
Kingdom of God".



Number one, **make a choice to read God's word before social media or any online activity every day.** So here it is, every day you have a choice of this first or this first. Do you know what this is? Social media, the portal to the world. The Bible, this is the doorway to God. The word of God. That choice reflects Christ's words. Seek first, the Kingdom of God.

## 2. Make a plan to:

**Create an intentional place of solitude, so that you can not only read God's Word, but also avoid any distractions until you can prayerfully apply the lesson you found: into your own life.**

That is the MOST VITAL part of each day's devotional time. Jesus called this in Matthew 4:4 "living by every word of God".

Number two, **create an intentional place of solitude.** So, you can own not only read God's word, but avoid distractions. In other words, I have a place set up, I have my Bible, I have my journal, I have my pen. I have it all set up so that when I stumbled out bed this morning, at 5:20 AM. It was all set up. I didn't have to look for. I didn't have to find it. All I had to do was push the button on the coffee machine, sit down, and start studying. I told you yesterday, I'm studying through the 52 greatest chapters. Why? Because the most vital part of your day is your devotional time. Jesus called this: living by every word of God. See that? Matthew 4:4.

## 3. Decide you will start a new habit to:

**Pray or meditate on a verse instead of listening to music for 15 minutes a day as you walk, drive, or ride.**

This can transform our travel time into an altar of sacrifice to God. Many of us are all alone as we travel except that Someone else is there, often sitting right next to us. God is waiting for us to talk to Him, invite Him into our day and JUST BELIEVE that He tags around with us everywhere we go.

Number three, **decide you'll start a new habit.** Prayer meditate on a verse instead of listening to music, for 15 minutes a day, as you drive or walk or ride, this can transform our travel time into an offering to God. So, you turn off everything else and you take a portion of scripture. You meditate on it and you read it out loud or you quote it out loud or you listen to it. You make that time, like we saw yesterday for the basics.

Do you remember that in the class yesterday? The basics. Listening to God. Eating God. Speaking back the truth to God. Sharing the truth about God. Those four basics of eating and chewing and meditating and witnessing.

## 4. Take the huge step of fasting from the ultimate distraction of Media: **Skip a day of going online, and of Social Media as a fast to prove you are not controlled by anything;** and INSTEAD memorize one verse to meditate upon that feeds your soul.

Number four, **take the huge step of fasting from the ultimate distraction of media. Skip a whole day of going online or social media and fast.** Instead, memorize a verse that day. I was just at a conference. It was a conference of missionaries that were going to the darkest spot on Earth. A land of 1.3 billion people with more idols, millions of idols in that place. I was challenging them to get in the word. I said, I'm going to have you do a quiz. They each got a little piece of paper and I said, I want you to do this. Write down how much time you spend on Facebook. How much time you spent on Pinterest. How much time you spend on Snapchat. How much time, I guess now it's tick-tock. How much time you spend on games each day. What was so interesting? No one even paused. They grabbed the piece of paper and I could see them all writing, 20, 10, 25, 40, 120 minutes, depending on how much time. I said, okay, it takes 72 hours to read the whole Bible, that's 15 minutes a day. I said, how many of you have read the whole Bible through in your life?

In front of me, we're over 200 vocational missionaries supported going to the mission field. How many of you have read the whole Bible through raise your hand? There was looking around. I said, I'm just really interested, how many of you have read the whole Bible? Out of 250, not 10%. The whole Bible. They didn't have 15 minutes a day. I said, look back at your sheet, total it up 160, 180, 195, 215. That's three hours and 35 minutes on my sheet here. That's what one of them had, how much time they spend on Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat,

Tick-Tock, gaming, and watching movies. Three hours a day. I said, why don't you just take 10% of that 30 minutes. Do 15 minutes in the word and 15 minutes in scripture memory. And praying those verses. Take a fast. Take time. Invest it with God.

5. Finally, ask the Lord if He is able to give you ENOUGH of His grace for you to:  
**Have a no-TV, no video, no Social Media, no gaming week or month**  
and see if you can study through  
an entire book of the Bible  
or read a great Christian classic.

Number five. Finally, if the Lord is able to give you enough grace, **have no TV, no video, no social media, no gaming for a whole week**. You'll change your whole life. Read a book. Read about C.T. Studd. Read an entire book of the Bible at one sitting, it only takes an hour to read. You can read almost three quarters of the books, especially in New Testament in an hour or less. It's amazing. Why?



Because Romans 12 says the only way to avoid affluenza is presenting ourselves back to God as a living sacrifice. That's the only way we avoid, end of days spiritual blindness. That comes because:

- Materialism blinds us.
- Affluenza infects us.
- We stop seeing God and hungering for His word.

That's the message Christ gave to the last church, but that's also the message that Christ gives to us today.



Let's pray.

Father in Heaven, I pray that you would stir in us a hunger for knowing you, Lord Jesus, that can only be satisfied by time spent in your word every day.

"Thy words were found," Jeremiah says, "and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart:" because "I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."

I pray for each one of these students. That they would have the joy of finding your word and eating it and finding the joy that comes. Divine joy that comes from knowing that we're your children.

Stir our hearts. Help us to make some conscious choices today, that will lead to our sight being totally focused on you, in these last days we live. For the precious name of Jesus, we pray. All God's people said, Amen.



# **AVOIDING END OF DAYS SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS**

EXPLORING THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson 8 of 20