

Navigating the BSF Lessons

The way that BSF publishes its lessons can be confusing. I think they do this for convenience of discussion and for convenience of making (printed or virtual online) handouts.

The new lesson and its materials start in what they call the “*Second Day*” of that lesson’s questions (question #3).

The “*First Day’s*” two questions actually refer to what you got out of the previous lesson. They are there because we discuss them the following Monday. (We can’t very well discuss them the previous Monday because we haven’t had that lecture or probably read those notes yet.)


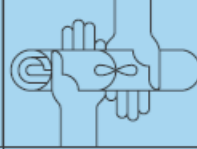
That’s probably no clearer than they are. So let’s try some examples graphically.

I’m arbitrarily picking Lesson #5 as the starting lesson for my example (see below):

The lesson begins with the questions. (Actually, it begins with reading the Bible passage. So for this example, for Lesson #5, first read all of Revelation 2:12-3:6. Then, having read the passage, start with the questions.)

Specifically, our example Lesson #5's material begins with question #3 on the "Second Day". (Questions #1 & 2 on the "First Day" are for our discussion of what we got out of the previous lesson. More on this, below.) This (Lesson #5) nominally begins on your Tuesday.

I've drawn a fat red line separating the previous lesson's materials from the new lesson's materials:

	SCRIPTURE: REVELATION 2:12-3:6
REVELATION: LESSON 5	
JESUS'S LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES, PART 2	

Lesson 5 Questions

First Day: Read Lesson 4 Notes.
The notes and lecture fortify the truth of the passage for understanding and application to daily life.

- How did the lecture convict or encourage you as the Lord addressed the churches in Ephesus and Smyrna?
- From the notes, how do the challenges faced by the early churches relate to churches today?

Second Day: Read Revelation 2:12-17.
The Lord addressed the church in Pergamum.

- What positive attributes of the church in Pergamum did the Lord commend?
- a. How did Balaam's teaching lead some of God's people astray? (For more background information, see Numbers 22-25; 31:16.)
- b. What weapon did Jesus say He would use to fight against wrong teaching, and what does His weapon represent? (See also Ephesians 6:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; and Hebrews 4:12.)

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Doing the questions will take up the week between Tuesday and next Monday's discussion. (How you break it up, of course, is up to you. They break it up by days. All I can say is that it's best not to leave the questions to the last minute on Sunday or Monday.)

After about four pages of questions, and a week of study, and our discussion on Monday, the next page is a blank page for you to use to fill in notes on the lecture as you listen to it on Tuesday, if you wish. (That'll be Tuesday of the week after the Tuesday on the previous page.)

(Of course, you don't have to do this if it's not useful. And you can write anywhere you want – on scrap paper, on your laptop, on the back of an envelope, whatever. However, you may find it useful to take some notes both for your memory and for usefulness in answering the next Lesson's question #1. So they've provided space to do that. But it's up to you.)

Lecture Notes



Next step: Read the lesson notes.

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The next page is the beginning of the published notes for the current lesson (Lesson #5). It's best not to read them until after you've done your questions (above). The questions are designed to get at your insights, what you learn from the Scripture passages, what the Holy Spirit tells you; not what the notes say. We already know *that*; so reading them comes afterward. (But many people, if they get stuck on a question, read notes anyway.)

Here's the first page of the notes on the current lesson, Lesson #5.

Lesson 5 Notes

Revelation 2:12–3:6

Focus Verse

‘The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels.’ (Revelation 3:5)

Outline

- Pergamum: Resist False Teaching – Revelation 2:12-17
- Thyatira: Reject Deceitful Leaders – Revelation 2:18-29
- Sardis: Reawaken and Repent – Revelation 3:1-6

Engage

Most people do not enjoy being evaluated. We often face the review of our work or behavior with apprehension. Who would not prefer to be affirmed rather than corrected? We may portray ourselves as stronger and wiser than we really are, deluding others and even ourselves. However, the Lord's absolute knowledge and penetrating judgment shatter our pretenses. **Jesus commits Himself to the spiritual vitality of His people.** He calls individual believers and His unified Church to pursue purity and uphold His truth wholeheartedly.

The churches at Pergamum, Thyatira, and Sardis had turned from false religion to Christ. However, friends and family, the culture around them, and their own past practices tempted them to dangerous compromises and deadly complacency. Deceitful teaching posed a menacing threat to people Jesus Christ had liberated from sin's tyranny. Jesus's letters called them to renewed urgency to live for Him—to grasp His majesty, power, and matchless love. Jesus issued a call to repentance and promised His transforming power on their behalf. The same is true today. **Jesus awakens sinners to repent from sin and live for Him.**

◆ **Pergamum: Resist False Teaching – Revelation 2:12-17**

The Recipient – 2:12a

Contradiction characterized the church of Pergamum. Though the people maintained their stand for Jesus Christ, they tolerated and even embraced wrong teaching about Him.

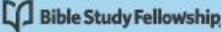

Pergamum was an inland city about 65 miles (105 km) north of Smyrna in the fertile valley of the Caicus River. The wealthy city boasted a library second only to the library in Alexandria. Pergamum's library contained an estimated 200,000 volumes, many of which were written on costly sheepskin parchment, which takes its name from Pergamum. People from throughout Asia flocked to this city.

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After ~8 pages of notes (which are excellent, though sometimes a little long), which nominally ends on Tuesday after our discussion, we get the materials for the next lesson's questions.

That next lesson (Lesson #6) is what we're studying in the meantime, in the current week between Tuesday when we listen to the lecture and (nominally) read the notes, and next Monday when we discuss it.

That next lesson, Lesson #6, begins immediately after the notes for Lesson #5. (But first, in our Monday discussion, we'll discuss what we got out of the lesson above, Lesson #5. That's questions #1 & 2 of the "First Day".) The next lesson itself, Lesson #6, begins on the "Second Day" with question #3, just as before. I've drawn that fat red line again to illustrate it:

	SCRIPTURE: REVELATION 3:7-22
REVELATION: LESSON 6 JESUS'S LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES, PART 3	

Lesson 6 Questions

First Day: Read Lesson 5 Notes.
The notes and lecture fortify the truth of the passage for understanding and application to daily life.

- In what ways did the lecture inspire you to hold fast to the truth and promises of God's Word?
- What commendations and warnings did you take to heart when reading the notes?

Second Day: Read Revelation 3:7-10.
Jesus addressed the church in Philadelphia.

- What do the following terms that describe Jesus mean? (Feel free to use other Bible passages for your answers, in addition to those listed.)
 - Holy (Hebrews 7:26)
 - True (1 John 5:20)
 - Holds the key of David (Isaiah 22:22; Matthew 16:19)
- What do the key and the door that only Jesus control represent? (See also Revelation 1:18.)

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I hope this helps.

It helps me, for my learning style. But if it doesn't help you, then don't get wrapped around the axle about it. Just ignore it. Maybe some other perspective works better for you, and that's fine.

(Personally, I think it'd be a lot clearer if they put a page break where I put my thick red line, and didn't mix the lesson questions on the same page like this. But that's just me; learning styles, again! Evidently, it helps others to have all the questions on the same page. C'est la vie!)