

## Lesson 59 The Revelation to John 1 – 11

### STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. *Who is this John who had these visions? Under what circumstances is he living? Read your Bible notes being aware of the general skepticism of some of our translations, then make your own prayerful discernment based on content, language and circumstances.*
2. *What kind of literature is this? Review the Old Testament books by just scanning briefly: Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel and Joel. Note the kinds of symbolism and compare to Revelation. What was the purpose of the book of Daniel, for example? What might be the purpose of Revelation?*
3. *How can these visions take on new meaning as time goes on, or are they tied to their historical context? What are the dangers of both approaches? What are the transcendent themes and characters that speak truth today?*

**Daniel 7: 9-14 and prayer.** This reading holds Jewish imagery from the Old Testament that bears on the book of Revelation.

**This New Testament writing is rooted in the Old Testament.** Especially close to it are the books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah. In Revelation there are allusions to 600 verses of the Old Testament which makes it a particularly fitting close to the Bible. Not only are there constant echoes of the whole past of Israel's history from Genesis on, but intertwined as integral to that history and religious experience is the "revelation of Jesus Christ." All this is brought together mightily into a scene that defies reason and earth-bound imagination. St. Paul tells us in II Corinthians 12:3 that he was taken to third heaven where he heard and saw things he could not express because no concepts or words are able to carry such things. In a like circumstance, St. John attempts to tell us the revelation he received of the end times through a mind filled with the Jewish

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symbols embedded in the Old Testament. These things are as far beyond our experience as St. Paul's being snatched up to third heaven. The symbolism puts us in touch with the vast panorama of history and God's control of it all; beyond that, however, we cannot make a neat system of it, nor can we use it to predict the future. No one knows the final timing, Jesus told us that, yet there is an infinite amount to be gained from the symbolism because it speaks to all ages and times.

**The meaning must be revealed.** Revelation is a way of saying that the truth of the ordering of history cannot come to human reason through logic alone. There is no stair step of thought that will bring us to this place of revelation. It is a place rather than an abstract idea. It is a place rather than an understanding. We are taken into this revelation bodily. That "place" of end time will be a total all encompassing experience. Therefore, the only thing done for our understanding is that the great curtain hiding this mystery will temporarily be drawn back by Christ Jesus for John's eyes to see, then through his attempts to describe it, we may view in our limited way the panorama, but not with an expectation of finalizing anything. We can only come away with an awed sense of the factors of human destiny under God's control.

**Many scholars have doubted John's authorship.** In defense of the Apostle John, the disciple Jesus loved, the companion of Mary for the rest of her earthly life, the Bishop of the Church at Ephesus, and the one who lived into a Second Century of the life of the Christian church, as the John who wrote this work, there are many evidences: 1) though much of the language is different, key ideas and words remain constant and parallel the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John is the most mystical, the most Jewish, the most Catholic of the four gospels. It is full of transcendent allusions that are not easy to make fit logic. It has

a meaning far beyond its words. Read John 5:25-29 for example. Here we have, in part, the Gospel roots for the book of Revelation. Jesus the Judge whose voice the dead will hear, the Son of man who is the Beginning of all, will be further revealed to us in Revelation. If the key words and phrases were given: 'to witness,' "to dwell or tabernacle," "testimony," "to overcome," 'the name (as expression of character),' "manna," "living water," "true (in the sense of real)," "Word of God," and "Lamb," and one was to assign them to a gospel writer, John would be the only possibility. John, a Galilean fisherman, may have had his gospel polished by a school of Greek followers who were late in life his disciples - that would explain the differences between it and this rough Greek, thoroughly Hebrew-based book which seems to have missed such editing. 2)The book opens with "letters" to seven churches; all of these churches lie in a crescent around the city of Ephesus - in fact the first is addressed to the Ephesians. John the Bishop of Ephesus has the inside knowledge and the heart to address these churches; they are his concern. Also there is apostolic authority inherent in this first chapter. The apostle not only claims the revelation is given to him, but then transmits Christ's judgment to the Church. It is the authority of the Bishop, the beloved Apostle, speaking. No other would be able to stand so firm, and speak so authoritatively to the whole Church, especially to dare to share such esoteric vision and revelation. What other John could possibly wield such authority as though it rightly belonged to him? 3) As John lived over a century, the timing is right. This time of tribulation may be during the Domitian persecution of AD95, or perhaps a local persecution which spurted up under hostile local governorsThe Bishop of Ephesus, John, is exiled to a Greek Island of Patmos off the coast of Asia Minor. This is a beautiful place, similar to other islands

in the Aegean sea - (it has an ancient monastery named St. John). His isolation and the setting provide an ideal backdrop against which John "sees" the end times through the prism of present suffering in the Church. The open sea, the vivid sky, the mountains typical of Greek islands, and an old man full of the Spirit, full of Jesus Christ, inundated with Hebrew symbolism which has come into a zenith in his heart and mind as holding the secrets of God, these are the instruments in God's hands. With this yielded tool, against this backdrop, the risen victorious Christ opens the secrets of what lies behind the upheavals of historic happenings, and what it all ultimately means. Of course the language under this set of circumstances takes off from the language John used in writing the Gospel and soars with new words and new uses of old words. Any experience of the Holy Spirit gift of prophecy exercised in a charismatic prayer group prepares us to accept the fact that in prophecy imagery and language change, transcending the prophet's normal everyday usage of words. How much more powerfully would we expect this phenomena in the venerable Apostle!

**He is writing about things that "must soon take place."** "For the time is near." What does this mean to us 2000 years later? . (The preterist view is that the prophesies of the book were fulfilled with the fall of Jerusalem in AD70.) Why did the Holy Spirit insist throughout the formation of the Church, recorded time and again, that the time of the Second Coming was imminent? All Christians since the Resurrection have lived in the expectation of the second return of Christ. Has this been a mistake? Or is this somehow necessary for every Christian life? We are all to be judged upon our death, so in a sense we all live in the time of the immediate coming of the Lord. Also preparation for the Bridegroom and the Wedding Feast is integral to the everyday life of a Christian, the expectation and

the joy, the experience of being ready, of not being distracted by anything else less important. As Jesus said to us, Go about the task I have given you, but wait and watch.” (Mark 13:33-37) And importantly., “ Behold, I am with you always to the close of the age (to the end of time).” Matthew 28:26

**Numerology becomes an important facet in the revelation.** A form of symbol, numbers were important for the ancient Jews. Letters of the Hebrew alphabet had numerical value which made a certain kind of speculation enticing. We have seen how the name DWD (David) had the value of fourteen - a double of the perfect seven, and how generations of the genealogy of Jesus were placed into patterns of fourteen. Such ideas were important in Judaism, and continued to be important to Christians. The thoroughly Jewish/Christian apostle John made them especially relevant in this writing. The number seven is a case in point. Numerology is mystical; the full meaning of seven would take a long time to discover. Seven is a symbol of perfection. The world was created in seven days - the last day being the day of rest that symbolizes the completion of God’s creative work. The concept of creation, rests on seven - its perfection and wholeness. A meaning behind that lies in the numbers that make up seven - four and three. Four’s symbol is the square or the squared circle, which symbolizes unity, wholeness, integrality. It appeals to our ability to grasp, to know, to comprehend. It brings created things together and makes sense of them. Therefore, it is a symbol for the ordered creation which our senses can discover and bring under reason and therefore, domination. Four symbolizes the concrete experience of the senses and their limits, for instance, the four corners of the world, the four

winds, the four directions. Three on the other hand resists order - it represents chaos and unbalance, or all that defies man’s ordering and understanding and lies outside of categories. The Holy Trinity Himself is too powerful, too demanding and too transcendent to be contained by man’s reason; He defies containment. The symbol for three is the triangle which is considered an unstable symbol. So with seven, we have chaos on one hand and order on the other - God’s Perfection encompasses both. Not only is seven significant in a deep way but all multiples of seven also; fourteen and forty nine etc. Half of seven - 3 1/2 years is also recorded as 42 months, or 1260 days. Half of perfection means incomplete, unfinished, or a time of trial that will end. The significance of “time, times and a half a time,” has a mysterious relationship to levels of experience of a multiple-layered image, as we will see. But time is seven, half a time, 3 and 1/2, times multiples of seven, the perfect number. The form that incorporates both three and four is the pyramid - four triangles based on a square. The number twelve is also one of the sacred numbers. Standing for the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, squared it is the total of the chosen people, not 144,000 numbered one by one, but 144 thousand standing for the whole number of those who rest upon the apostles and the patriarchs. A thousand becomes a way of saying a great multitude, like we might say “a billion” when we mean uncounted masses. Multiples of a thousand simply refer to a vaster and vaster number. One less than seven becomes the symbol of evil. Therefore, 666 is the numerical symbol of the most evil of evil men, the Anti-Christ. It warns that the wholly false has a near appearance of the true.

**As for seven spirits, in the context this is seen to be the Holy Spirit.** That is, not His gifts or His manifestations, but He Himself. This we see from the 4th verse;” He who is, who

was and who is to come” (that is, the Father), “from the seven spirits before His throne,” ( the Holy Spirit) and from Jesus (The Son) In other words, this presents the Holy Trinity. Note 2:27 where a very Johannine principle is stated concerning the dependence of the Son upon the Father. The “seven spirits” (seven equaling perfection) is symbolic expression of the manifestation of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity in the readings of Pentecost Sunday, the flame dividing and resting on each one. The Holy Spirit has this differentiating activity - He is fully present to each person, He lives within each person, therefore though wholly Spirit and undivided, He is paradoxically spirits and divided. The seven spirits in all its usage mean this diversity and unity. Verse 7 also alludes to the Gospel of John, “everyone who pierced him.” It has antecedents in Zechariah 12:10. The gospel of John is the only one who mentions the piercing of Christ’s side (also I John) and the emission of water and blood - a very significant moment for the Church when the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist were initiated from Christ’s side.

**Being “in the Spirit” is a state of elevation of mind above the limits of the body and the world.** It is similar to St. Paul’s experience in II Cor. “In the Spirit “John sees the vision of the Son of Man (verses 12-16) the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega; all are images pregnant with meanings of totality of time and space. From this vision will be taken pieces to fit into each of the separate prophecies over the churches. The imagery is Hebrew, not Greek. Greek imagery in comparison is superficial and demands unity for its beauty. To draw or sketch these images would find them grotesque and surrealistic; without visual regularity they would resemble modern art. Draw a lamb with seven eyes and what do you have? Something Picasso might draw were he ever Christian. But where modern art is cynical and

disparaging, Hebrew imagery is not meant to be visualized. It is meant to convey deep truth about what is being

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described. This is a different intent than the imagery of the Greeks which is beauty for beauty’s sake. These images are asymmetrical and disorganized, more of the “three” quality than the “four’, and for the sake of profound meaning.

**Jesus appears to speak to His Church.** Reading through the letters to seven churches we begin to understand the concern of the transcendent Jesus over the conditions He finds in the Church at the turn of the First Century and always. He appears to commend and encourage them for steadfastness, or to warn bring them to repentance. The formula is consistent - a statement about their faithfulness to Him, followed by a descriptive phrase from the vision of Christ, followed by commendation or condemnation, ending with admonition, a promise, and exhortation to the faithful. “Satan’s throne” refers to a temple with a statue of the emperor where compulsory worship was demanded. The Nicolaitans seem to have been a heretical sect, syncretistic and gnostic, led perhaps by Nicolas one of the first deacons. The other illusions from the Old Testament (Balaam, Jezebel) refer to the adulteration of the true faith, a mixture of the false with the true resulting in false worship. These letters close with the beautiful invitation of Christ to each believer to open the door to Him, to hold fast in the hour of trial, and to conquer through patient endurance.

**The scene has been laid.** The curtains are pulled back in heaven. God the Father sits on the throne before which are the seven torches which are the seven spirits (Holy Spirit) surrounded by the twenty-four elders, the living creatures, the lampstands, and in front of Him, the glassy sea. The figure of

honor is the Lamb, a lamb who appears to be slain - the ongoing eucharistic sacrifice. This Lamb is the only one worthy to open the sealed scroll. That scroll is a symbol of God's unutterable, unknown, and eternal plan. Its opening is the beginning of the Day of the Lord which had been prophesied throughout Israel's history, the Day on which God would intervene in worldly affairs, to bring about the final last battle, to vindicate those who had been true to Him, and to punish those who had been His enemies. The Church must endure persecution, keeping hope that she will be vindicated on That Day. In a real sense this is a timeless moment that is a truth for every Now.

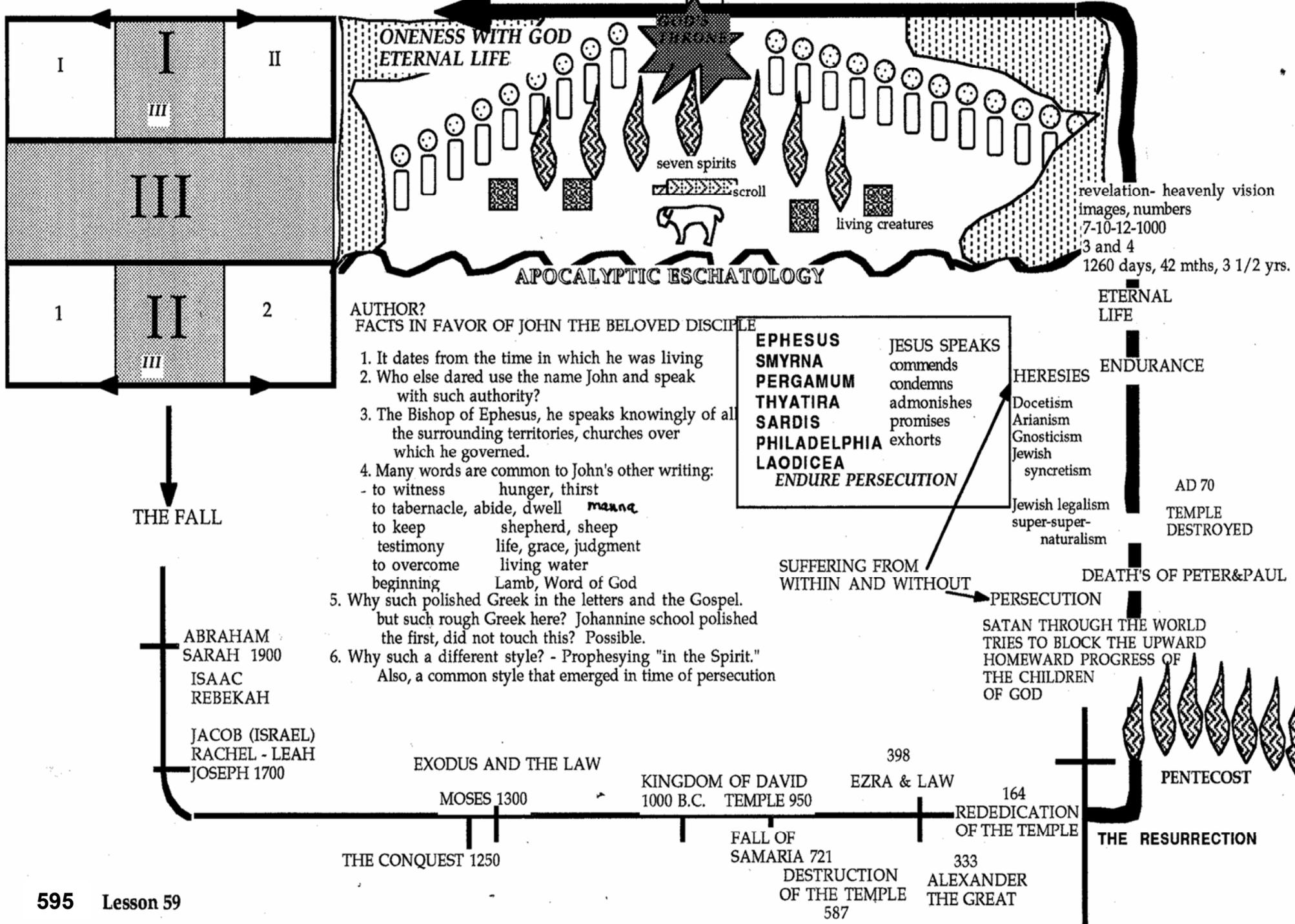
**Help will not come naturally, but supernaturally.** It will be a dramatic intervention by Almighty God which will bring the arrogant world powers to their knees with a rod of iron. The Lamb has seven eyes; He is all seeing, interior and exterior things are all open to Him. He has seven horns; all power and authority is His. Every knee shall bow. Six seals are then opened by the Lamb. At each opening cataclysmic events are unleashed. Four horsemen are the first to ride out bringing doom, famine, pestilence and death - the fifth seal reveals the souls of the martyrs waiting under the altar for vindication. A seventh seal is delayed while there is an interlude (chapter 7) to give needed assurance to God's people who are sealed against the terrors. One hundred and forty-four (that too is a symbol of completeness -  $12 \times 12$ , the number of apostles and patriarchs) stands for all those who are saved, who are based on the Old and New Testament foundation of truth. As was explained, one thousand simply means a very large number.

**Songs of praise punctuate the book.** These begin with chapter four - Holy Holy Holy, and continue at the end of 7.

Then chapter 8 sees the seventh seal broken, and that seal begins seven more cosmic events affecting the earth, this time announced by seven angels with seven trumpets. At each blast of the trumpet  $1/3$  of the created order is destroyed: the earth, the sea, the waters and the planets. After the fourth an eagle announces the first triple woe. The fifth trumpet blast opens the bottomless pit from which locusts emerge to torture the unsealed. The 6th releases four angels to bring cavalry to kill  $1/3$  of mankind.

**There is no repentance on earth,** which is what the punishments are meant to accomplish. Again there is an interlude after the 6th trumpet, a moment of consolation and assurance for believers. During this interval, the prophet is given a little scroll to eat, words which he must prophesy even though they are bitter when ingested. The Temple, the altar and those who worship there are measured. Two witnesses are killed by the beast. (Elijah and Moses? Or Peter and Paul?). Then the seventh trumpet is blown and the final revelation, *the consummation of God's kingdom is revealed.*

I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA  
WHO IS, WHO WAS, WHO IS TO COME



## Lesson 59 Revelation 1 - 11 Synopsis

1 God has made known to John what is soon to take place he witnesses to the word of God and to testimony of Jesus Christ John to the seven churches grace from the Father the seven spirits and Jesus the faithful witness to Him who loves us, be glory He is coming on the clouds every one who pierced Him will see Him and wail I am the Alpha and Omega I, John, share the tribulation on the island called Patios in the Spirit on the Lord's Day I heard a trumpet voice say "write what you hear in a book send to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea." I saw seven golden lampstands, standing in the midst the Son of man clothed in a robe with a golden girdle His head with hair white as wool eyes like flame of fire feet like burnished bronze voice like many waters in His right hand seven stars from His mouth issued a sharp two-edged sword face like the sun in full strength fell at His feet as though dead He said, "I am the first and the last the living one, I have the keys

of Death and Hades, write what you see, what is to take place" the stars are angels lampstands are the churches  
2. to the angel of Ephesus write (words of Him who holds the stars and walks among the lampstands) I know your work, your endurance your test of those who call themselves apostles you are bearing up and have not grown weary but you don't have your first love repent and do the works you did or I will remove the lampstand I hate the works of the Nicolaitans onto him who conquers he will eat of the tree of life to Smyrna write: (the words of the first, last, who died, came alive) I know your tribulation and poverty the slander of the Jews you are about to be tested don't fear, be faithful to death he who conquers will not be hurt by the second death to Pergamum write: (words of Him with the sharp two-edged sword) Satan's throne is there, hold fast you did not deny the faith even when one was killed but, some are Nicolaitans, repent or I will come and war against you to him who conquers I will give hidden manna and a white stone on the stone a new name to Thyatira write: (words of Him who has eyes like flame of fire with feet of bronze)

I know your love, faith, service, and patient endurance but - you tolerate the Jezebel teaching immorality and eating food sacrificed to idols she must repent or I will throw her on a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her repent of her doings I will strike her children dead he who conquers, I will give power over the nations to be ruled and I will give him the morning star to Sardis write: (words of Him who has seven spirits of God and the seven stars) you are dead, awake, strengthen what remains; repent, awake I will come like a thief some are clothed in white and are worthy, he who conquers shall be clad in white his name in the book of life I'll confess his name to the Father to Philadelphia write: (words of Him who has the key of David who opens and shuts and no one can challenge) you have kept my word with patient endurance despite persecution by Jews I will keep you from the hour of trial which is coming on the whole earth he who conquers, make a pillar in the Temple of God I will write on him the name of God and the name of the city of God New Jerusalem and my new name to Laodicea write: (words of Amen

the beginning of God's creation) lukewarm, I spew you out you are rich, but you are pitiable buy my gold that you may be rich salve your eyes so you may see those I love, I reprove I stand at the door and knock I will come in and eat with him and him with me; he who conquers will sit with me on my throne in heaven from an open door the voice like a trumpet said "come up hither, I will show you what must take place" lo, a throne in heaven, one seated on the throne like jewels round it, twenty-four thrones twenty-four elders, gold crowns the throne flashes lightning before the throne seven torches of fire, the seven spirits of God a sea of glass round the throne on each side, four living creatures eyes in front and behind first face like a lion, second an ox third a man, fourth a flying eagle each had six wings full of eyes singing, "holy, holy, holy" elders fall down to worship a praise to creation  
4. He sitting on the throne holds a scroll with seven seals angel proclaimed with loud voice who would open the scroll? the Lion of Judah, Root of David I saw a Lamb standing as though it had been slain with seven horns and seven eyes, the seven spirits He took the scroll, creatures

- and elders fell down  
each held a harp, bowls of incense  
they sang a new song of praise  
myriads of angels praise the Lamb  
Him who sits on the throne a scene  
of worship
6. the Lamb opened the first seal  
first creature said, "Come!" a  
white horse and rider comes a  
crown given, he went to conquer  
the second seal opened second  
creature said, "Come!" red horse  
and rider permitted to take  
peace from the earth third seal  
opened, creature said "Come  
black horse and rider the price  
of wheat and barley weighed in  
the balance  
fourth seal, fourth living creature  
pale horse, Death the rider  
given power to kill 1/4 the earth  
fifth seal, I saw under the altar  
souls of slain for the word of God  
"how long before you avenge  
our blood?" given a white robe  
they are told to rest a little longer  
till number to be killed is complete  
sixth seal is opened  
behold, a great earthquake  
sun turns black and moon of blood  
stars fell, sky vanished  
mountains, islands are removed  
the great ones hid in caves, crying  
to be hid from wrath of the Lamb
7. I saw four angels at four corners of  
earth holding back four winds an  
angel ascends with seal of God he  
calls to the four angels do not harm  
the earth till
- we have sealed servants of God  
144 thousand will be sealed  
12 thousand from each tribe  
a great uncounted number  
before the throne from all nations  
clothed in white robes  
praising God and the Lamb  
the angels fell on their faces  
and worshipped God  
who are these in white robes  
they have come out of tribulation  
and have washed their robes  
in the Blood of the Lamb  
whom they serve day and night  
they are sheltered  
from hunger, thirst by the Lamb  
who will be in their midst  
God will wipe away their tears
8. the Lamb opens the seventh seal  
silence for 1/2 hour in heaven  
then seven angels with trumpets  
another angel with a censer  
incense mingles in saint's prayers  
censer with fire thrown on earth  
trumpets blown one at a time  
1 - hail, fire, blood, 1/3 earth burnt  
2 - a burning mountain into the sea  
1/3 of the sea destroyed  
3 - a star Wormwood fell  
1/3 waters turn bitter  
4 - 113 stars, moon, sun darken  
an eagle crying three woes
9. 5 - to a star fallen from heaven  
a key is given  
to the bottomless pit  
the smoke of a great furnace  
darkened the sun and air  
locusts like scorpions came out  
to harm those without God's seal
- on their foreheads  
they are tortured, but not killed men  
will seek death  
locusts like horses arrayed for  
war crowns, faces, women's hair,  
teeth like lion's, scales like iron  
wings, tails like scorpions king is  
Abaddon, or Apollyon first woe is  
over, two are to come  
6 - a voice from the altar  
releases angels at the Euphrates to  
kill 1/3 of mankind  
thousands of cavalry go out  
horses like lion's heads  
plagues to kill 1/3 of mankind  
power lies in the mouths, tails  
they wound the rest of mankind  
that didn't repent demon worship
10. another angel comes down  
from heaven carrying a little scroll  
he called out with a voice  
like seven thunders  
seal up what they have said  
do not write it down  
the angel swore to God  
no more delays, go, take the scroll  
eat it, bitter to stomach  
but sweet to the mouth  
prophecy about peoples  
nations and kings
11. measure the Temple of God  
the altar and the worshippers  
for 3 1/2 years nations will trample  
the holy city  
two witnesses are given  
the power to prophecy  
these are the two lampstands  
which stand before the Lord  
whoever harms them is doomed
- they have power over nature the  
beast will conquer them killed,  
the bodies will lie in the city  
where their Lord was crucified  
people will gaze on their bodies  
they will be merry because these  
prophets tormented them a loud  
voice calls them to heaven  
earthquakes fell 1/10 of the city  
seven thousand killed  
those remaining gave God  
glory second woe is passed  
the third woe is to come  
7 - an angel blew a trumpet loud  
voices are heard in heaven  
kingdom of the world has become  
the kingdom of Our Lord Christ the  
elders worship God  
falling on their faces  
a song of praise for reign of God  
the Temple in heaven is opened  
and the ark of the covenant seen  
lightning flashes, earthquake, hail

## Lesson 59 Revelation 1 • 11 Outline

### I. Background to the Book of Revelation to John

#### A. A struggle with Rome threatens to crush the Church

1. the persecution of Nero AD65-69
  - a. Peter and Paul were killed (chapter 10?) ca A065
  - b. the Temple probably had fallen in Jerusalem, so the book is dated after AD70  
"temple" in text is an ultimate heavenly temple 11:19,16:1
2. the Domitian persecution AD81-96
  - a. he is an ardent upholder of state religion, veneration of gods
  - b. persecuted Jews and Christians who ignored the state religion
3. the Apostle John lived during both; the Domitian persecution most likely
4. the author sees the decisive struggle between God and Satan ending with the victory of God and annihilation of all opposed to His rule

#### B. The author is debated

1. some think an author of the Johannine school, but not the Apostle
  - a. because of rough Greek compared to the gospel and epistles
  - b. a difference in literary style
  - c. some key words almost missing: light, darkness, truth, love
2. an argument for the Apostle as the author
  - a. it is from the time when he was a living bishop and apostle
    - 1) none other in the church had his apostolic authority
    - 2) his strong Hebrew background, and his Greek experience are both present in the text
    - 3) who else would call dare himself, "John",
      - a) who bore witness to the word of God and testimony of Jesus? 1:2, John 21:24
      - b) "even to all that he saw" compare with I John 1
    - 4) he has been the Bishop of Ephesus
      - a) all churches written to surround Ephesus -1:13
      - b) written with the authority and knowledge of a bishop
      - c) exile to Patmos is likely, on account of Jesus 1:9
  - b. this rough Greek is untouched, his own writing
    - 1) that of a Jewish fisherman
    - 2) the gospel, however, was polished by the Johannine school
  - c. many words and concepts are common to all John's writings
    - 1) to witness
    - 2) to tabernacle, to dwell

- 3) to keep
- 4) testimony, witness *marturion* 32 x in John's writing, 9x in Rev, 8x in letters, 15 x in gospel, only 20x in all other N.T. books, *marturia* only in Rev 8x, and John 5x, (once in *Acts*) *martureo* in gospel 10x, letters 3x, Rev 2x, other N.T. books 3x
- 5) to overcome
- 6) 10 name
- 7) true, in the sense of real
- 8) hungering, thirsting
- 9) manna
- 10) shepherd and sheep
- 11) life, grace, judgment
- 12) living water
- 13) lamb, Word of God
- 14) Son of Man
- 15) *beginning*: 8x in the gospel, 9x in the letters, 4x in Rev, 17x in the rest of the N.T. (Mk and Mt each 4x)

#### d. language changes are remarkable when under inspiration of the Holy Spirit

- 1) modern witness to this in H.S. prayer groups
    - a) claims an elevation of the mind above the usual limits
    - b) the language used changes dramatically, like Dn and Rev
  - 2) this composition is entirely different in purpose and literary style from the letters and the gospels
  - 3) John conceives his mission as prophetic 1:3,19:18, 22:7, 10:18
  - 4) a visionary experience uses fewer abstract words: light, truth, love
- e. John's Gospel and the Apocalypse are both outspokenly against the opposing Jews

#### C. The style and relationship to the rest of Scripture

1. apocalyptic eschatology - hidden writing of the last things is also in O.T.
    - a. entirely eschatological in outlook - concerned with the end
    - b. apocalyptic language like the book of Daniel and Zechariah
    - c. full of Hebrew symbols common from Genesis on
    - d. a common written form in times of religious persecution and stress
  2. of 404 verses, 278 contain an Old Testament excerpt
  3. The Day of the Lord - this is the final depiction; the time is near 1:3, 6:17
- D. As the last book of the Bible in relation to the first, it makes the full circle
1. Gn, heaven and earth; Rev, a new heaven and new earth

2. Gn, *sun* and moon; Rev, no sun or moon
3. Gn, a perfect garden for two; Rev, a holy city for the redeemed
4. Gn, Adam, bridegroom and Eve, bride; Rev, Christ, the new Adam, bridegroom and the Church, bride
5. Gn, the beginning of sin; Rev, the end of sin
6. Gn, Satan the deceiver; Rev, the end of Satan and deception
7. Gn, the woman Eve; Rev, the woman Mary
8. Gn, the origin of suffering, pain; Rev, the end of sorrow, pain
9. Gn, God dwells with His people and then rebuffed; Rev, God dwells with His people eternally

## II. Purpose

- A. To strengthen the brethren in time of persecution
  1. emphasis on *patient endurance*
  2. uses a symbolic language; a kind of code unintelligible to persecutors
- B. To unravel for them the meaning of their suffering
- C. To show forth their glorious goal
- D. To assure the suffering that God is in control of everything

## III. Images of the Holy Trinity

- A. The Father sits upon the throne 4:2
  1. the Alpha and Omega 1:8
  2. the "I Am" 1:8 (Ex. 3:14)- common usage in John's gospel (outline 47)
  3. Who is, Who was, and Who is to come 1:8
- B. The Son ( see also descriptive phrases in letters to churches)
  1. the faithful witness 1:5
  2. firstborn of the dead 1:5
  3. ruler of the kings on earth 1:5
  4. loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood
  5. made us a kingdom of priests 1:6
  6. is coming on the clouds, every eye will see Him, those who pierced Him will wail on account of Him (Zech 12:10) (John 19:34)
  7. the Son of man imagery 1:13-16, Ez 19, 30, 33, Mk 2:10, Dn 7:13, 10:5
    - a. clothed with a long robe, a golden girdle round his breast
    - b. head and hair white as wool
    - c. eyes, flames of fire
    - d. feet burnished bronze
    - e. a voice sounding like many waters
    - f. his right hand holds seven stars

- g. his mouth, a sharp two-edged sword
  - h. a face like the sun shining in full strength
  8. the first and the last (see Father) 1:17
  9. the living one who died, and is alive for evermore
  10. has the keys of Death and Hades
  11. the Lamb 5:6 who appears as though slain
- C. The Holy Spirit - how to image the Holy Spirit? diversity in *unity*- solution:
1. the seven spirits 1:4 are the Holy Spirit
    - a. seven meaning perfect, complete
    - b. spirits like tongues of fire dividing, resting on each on Pentecost
  2. the seven torches of fire before the throne of God, the seven spirits 4:5

## IV. Messages to the Churches.

- A. A loud trumpet-like voice speaks - write and send:
- B. The same form to each of seven churches
  - 1, address : a. Ephesus, b. Smyrna, c. Pergamum, d. Thyatira, e. Sardis, f. Philadelphia, g. Laodicea
  2. a descriptive phrase referring to Jesus to each of the above in order:
    - a. He who holds seven stars, walks among seven lampstands
    - b. the first and last, who died and came to life
    - c. the one who has the sharp two-edged sword
    - d. the Son of God who has eyes like flames of fire, feet of bronze 2:18
    - e. who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars 3:1
    - f. the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens 3:7
    - g. the Amen, the faithful and true witness, where begins God's creation (See John 1:1)
  3. commendations to each of the above in order:
    - a. they are patiently enduring, have not grown weary 2:2 hate Nicolaitan sect, so does Christ
    - b. Christ knows their tribulation and poverty, how they are slandered by Jewish party 2:9, faithful to death, they'll receive the crown of life
    - c. Satan's throne is in their city and they've held fast 2:13
    - d. they have love, faith, service and faithful endurance 2:19
    - e. only a few are worthy 3:4
    - f. kept the word and have not denied the name 3:8 patient endurance despite persecution from Jews 3:9
    - g. love you and reprove you 3:19
  4. condemnation to each of the above in order:

- a. you have abandoned your first love, repent 2:4
  - b. none
  - c. some are Nicolaitans, repent of these beliefs 2:14
  - d. a Jezebel, a woman who teaches immorality, won't repent 2:20
  - e. you are dead, your works are not perfect, repent
  - f. none
  - g. you are neither hot or cold, unpalatable 3:15-16 rich but pitiable.
5. admonition to each of the above in order:
- a. remember from what you have fallen and repent 2:5
  - b. do not fear what you are about to suffer 2:10 be faithful unto death
  - c. repent of teaching of the Nicolaitans 2:15
  - d. hold fast to what you have until I come 2:24
  - e. awake, strengthen what remains, remember what you received 3:3
  - I, hold fast to what you have, I am coming soon 3:11
  - g. buy from me refined gold so you may be rich, white garments for your nakedness; those I love, I reprove, so be zealous, repent 2:17-19
6. promise and exhortation to the faithful
- a. to him who conquers I grant to eat of the tree of life 2:7
  - b. be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life; he who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death 2:10
  - c. to him who conquers I will give manna, a white stone with a new name no one knows except him who receives it 2:17
  - d. he who conquers, I will give him power over nations, he will rule with a rod of iron, and I will give him the morning star 2:26
  - e. he who conquers shall be clad in white, his name in the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father 3:5
  - f. he who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple, writing on him my God's name, and the city's name, and my own new name 3:12
  - g. he who conquers I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father 3:21

## V. Symbols

### A. imagery

- 1. woman
- 2. horns - power of rule
- 3. eyes - vision
- 4. wings
- 5. trumpets
- 6. sword
- 7. white robes - purity or martyrdom

- 8. palms
  - 9. crowns - victorious battle against evil
  - 10. sea
  - 11. stars are the angels of the churches 1:20
  - 12. lampstands (Zech 4:2) are the churches 1:20
  - 13. seals
  - 14. trumpets
    - 15. bowls of incense the prayers of the saints 5:8, 8:3-4
  - 16. angels - messengers from God
  - 17. bowls of wrath
- B. colors: white, red, purple, black
- C. numbers
- 1. seven: completeness, perfection
    - a. the finishing of creation (seven days)
    - b. the combination of three and four
    - c. images of seven, its multiples of seven, fourteen, forty-nine etc.
      - 1) churches 1:11
      - 2) lampstands 1:12, 2:1
      - 3) spirits 5:6
      - 4) horns 5 :6
      - 5) eyes 5:6
      - 6) seals on the scroll 5:1
  - 2. six - one less than seven, the pseudo-christ, the evil contender
  - 3. four - the square or circle, the comprehensible, the world, unity, integrality, order
  - 4. three - chaos, the incomprehensible, that which lies outside of categories, defies containment, not orderly - triangle is the symbol
  - 5. three and one half (1260 days, 42 mths, 3 1/2 years) half of seven - the incomplete, the finite, the imperfect, a time that will pass
  - 6. twelve and multiples of twelve, 144 etc. the twelve tribes and twelve apostles, again 4x3. Both odd and even number divide it evenly
  - 7. thousand - a vast number, like we might use "a billion"

## VI. Seven Visions

### A. The Heavenly Court Chapter 4

- 1. a throne in heaven and one seated on the throne 4:2
  - a. like jasper, carnelian
  - b. rainbow around the throne 4:3 flashes of lightning and thunder
  - c. before the throne seven torches of fire - the Holy Spirit

- d. in front a sea of glass 4:6
- e. in right hand of Him seated, a scroll sealed with seven seals
- 2. twenty-four thrones around the throne 4:4
  - a. elders in white garments with golden crowns are seated
  - b. fall down, cast their crowns singing and worshipping 4:10
- 3. round the throne four living creatures 4:6 traditionally ascribed to the four evangelists, though probably meant as symbols for all life
  - a. full of eyes before and behind
  - b. first like a lion (Mark)
  - c. second like an ox (Luke)
  - d. third with a face of a man (Matthew)
  - e. fourth a flying eagle (John)
  - f. each with six wings
  - g. they never cease to sing: Holy Holy Holy
- 4. a strong angel proclaiming who is worthy to open the scroll ? a.
  - no one is found able to open it
  - b. one of the elders said, "weep not, the Lion of Judah can open the scroll and its seven seals." 5:5
- 5. a Lamb is standing as though slain 5:6 (John 1:29, 1:36) (Rev 5:6,7,12,13; 6:1-12;7:9,16,14,17;12:11;13:8- 11; 14:1-4, 10;15:3;17:14;19:7-9;21:9-14,22,23,27;22:1-3 The Eucharistic Lord - the Lamb *as though slain* - now alive but continually bearing the marks of sacrifice
  - a. seven horns - complete power
  - b. seven eyes- which are seven spirits (Holy Spirit)
  - c. He took the scroll 5:8
    - 1) the 24 elders, and 4 living creatures fell down before the Lamb
    - 2) with harps and bowls of incense, prayers of the saints 5:8
- 6. thousands of voices of angels "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain." 5:12
- B. Opening the Seven Seals of the Scroll
  1. WAR the Lamb opened the first seal
    - a. first living creatures says, "Come!" 6:1
    - b. white horse rider with a bow and crown goes out conquering
  2. WAR second seal 6:3.
    - a. second living creatures says, "Come!"
    - b. a red horse with rider 6:4 given sword to take peace from the earth
  3. FAMINE third seal
    - a. third living creature says, "Camel" 6:5
    - b. black horse and rider carries a balance
      - c. a voice "Quart of wheat for a denarius etc.do not harm oil and wine" •
- 4. DEATH fourth seal 6:7
  - a fourth living creature says, "Come!"
  - b. pale horse, rider's name - death, power over 1/4 of the earth 6:8
  - d. to kill with the sword and with famine, pestilence and wild beasts 5, MARTYRS the fifth seal! 6:9-11
    - a. under the altar the souls of those slain for the Word of God
    - b. cried out with a loud voice for their blood to be avenged
    - c. given a white robe and told to rest until number to be killed complete
- 6. CATAclysm sixth seal is opened 6:12
  - a. a great earthquake, moon like blood, sun black, stars fell, sky vanished, mountains and islands removed
  - b. king and great men, slave and free, hid in caves
- 7. ASSURANCE Interlude to assure God's people
  - a. four angels at four corners of the earth 7:1
  - b. another angel with the seal of God Ez. 9:4-6 called to four angels
    - 1) do not harm nature till servants of God are sealed on foreheads
      - a) 144,000 to be sealed
      - b) 12,000 out of each of the twelve tribes
      - c) a great multitude uncountable clothed in white robes
    - c. elders, living creatures, angels fell on their faces, worshipped God
    - d. "who are these in white?" - martyrs, robes washed in blood of Lamb
- 8. the Lamb opens the seventh seal 8:1
  - a. silence in heaven for half an hour
  - b. seven angels and seven trumpets
    - 1) another angel at the altar with incense
      - a) mingled incense and prayers of saints
      - b) censer thrown on earth - thunder, lightning, earthquake 8:5
    - 2) BURNING 1/3 - first angel blew his trumpet hail and fire mixed with blood fell on earth and burnt 1/3 of everything
    - 3) DESTRUCTION OF SEA - second angel blew his trumpet, a great burning mountain fell into sea , 1/3 of the sea blood, creatures died, 1/3 ships destroyed 8:9
    - 4) 1/3 WATERS POLLUTED third angel blew his trumpet, great star fell, 1/3 of rivers, water became wormwood, many men died
    - 5) 1/3 OF LIGHT DARKENED fourth angel blew trumpet, 1/3 of sun struck, 1/3 of stars, light darkened, 1/3 of daylight and night
    - 6) WARNING an eagle crying woe, woe, woe at blasts to be blown
    - 7) SCORPIONS fifth angel blew his trumpet 9:1, a star fallen from

- heaven to earth given a key of the shaft of the bottomless pit
- a) smoke rose like a furnace 9:2 sun, air were darkened
  - b) from the smoke came locusts (*first woe*)
    - (1) power of scorpions to harm those not sealed
    - (2) allowed to torture them, not kill them
    - (3) men will seek death and not find it
    - (4) like strange horses arrayed for battle 9:7
    - (5) power for hurting in their tails
    - (6) their king is angel of the pit, Abaddon, Gk. Apollyon
- 8) CAVALRY sixth angel blew his trumpet 9:13 a voice from four horns of altar "release four angels bound at the Euphrates"
- a) angels were released, held ready to kill 1/3 of mankind
  - b) troops of calvary 200,000,000 (*woe 2*)
    - (1) riders in breastplates color of fire, sapphire, sulphur
    - (2) heads of horse like lions with fire, killed 1/3 of mankind
    - (3) power in their mouths and tails like serpents
  - c) rest of mankind didn't repent of idolatry, immorality 9:20
- 9) ASSURANCE Interlude - consolation, assurance for seer and believers, mighty angel comes from heaven 10:1
- a) wrapped in a cloud, rainbow over his head, face like the sun
  - d) legs like pillars of fire, one on land, the other on sea
  - e) little scroll in his hand (Ez 2:8, 3:1.3, Jer 15:16)
  - f) seven thunders spoke , "seal up and do not write it down"
  - g) angel swore to heaven - no more delay
  - h) voice spoke seer to take the little scroll, eat it, a prophesy about peoples, nations, kings.
- 10) INTERLUDE - measure the Temple, the altar and those who worship there 11:1 but not the court
- a) the court will be trampled by the nations
    - (1) the Temple, altar and worshippers are claimed for heaven: measured, they are within God's protection
    - (2) all references to the Temple are to the heavenly one
    - (3) the trampled court is St. John's reference to the earthly Temple in Jerusalem, trampled for forty-two months, 3 1/2 yrs.of testing that will eventually end
  - b) TWO WITNESSES will prophesy 3 1/2 years Zech 3:1-4:14
    - (1) they are two olive trees, two lampstands
    - (2) if any harm them, doomed to die
    - (3) power over waters, earth and plague

- {4} killed by the beast of the bottomless pit
  - (5) dead bodies will lie in the street of Rome/Jerusalem - the overlay meaning is Rome crucified Jesus, not in Rome but in Jerusalem. Rome is Sodom and Gomorrah - Babylon. Rome killed Peter and Paul
  - (6) 3 1/2 days men will gaze at, make merry over bodies {7} they will rise and stand on their feet
  - (8) a loud voice calls them up to heaven in a cloud
  - c) an earthquake - 7000 people killed, the rest terrified
- 11) seventh angel blew trumpet
- a) loud voices in heaven -"the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."
  - b) twenty-four elders fell on their faces worshipping God
  - c) God's Temple in heaven was opened
    - {1} the Ark of the Covenant seen within the Temple
    - {2} flashes of lightning thunder, earthquake

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE NEXT LESSON OUTLINE

## VII. Songs of Praise

- A. Holy, holy holy is the Lord God Almighty 4:8
- B. Worthy are thou, Our Lord and God 4:11 praise for creation
- C. Praise to the Lamb, worthy to open the seals of the scroll 5:9
- D. Praise to the Lamb 5:13
- E. Praise to God and the Lamb 7:10, 12,
- F. Life of the martyrs in heaven 7:14-17
- G. Worship of God and thanksgiving 11:17

## VIII. New

- A. Conqueror 2:17-3:12
- B. Name 2:17, 3:12
- C. Jerusalem 3:12, 21:2
- D. Heavens and earth 21:2
- E. All things new 21:5
- F. Song 5:9,14:3