

REVELATION - THE FINAL VICTORY

(Lesson 2)

Intro: How are we to understand the seven "visions" that John saw - real visions, dreams, his

imagination? *sometimes God reveals what is coming in dreams, Joseph interpreted dreams for Pharaoh; other times God reveals things of the future or important events - Isaiah's call; Ezekiel's call, Daniel's vision of future kingdoms - four beasts, future kingdoms, Antichrist; Zechariah's visions of God's people returning to Promised Land; Through these visions God reveals that he will destroy the church's enemies*

- The Second Vision: The Seven Seals

1. John's Vision of God (4:1-11)

- What is Jesus going to reveal to John as he was "in the Spirit" for a second time? - *John is describing his second vision on that Sunday while exiled on the island of Patmos; it's a vision of what must happen*
- Who is the one who sits on the rainbow-circled throne? - *God the Father, reminiscent of O. T. visions of God, described in colors of precious stones, glory of Lord was often a bright light*
- Who are the 24 elders? (Cf. Matthew 19:28; Genesis 49:28) - *12 disciples on twelve thrones, 12 tribes of Israel = 24 elders, representing the Old and New Testament church*
- What is significant about them sitting on thrones? wearing crowns? clothed in white? - *thrones symbolize authority, likewise crowns; white -purity, clothed in righteousness of Christ*
- If the sea as the wicked is described as a "tossing sea which cannot rest" (Isaiah 57:20) what would the sea of glass, clear as crystal represent? - *complete calm, perfect peace that exists in the presence of God, nothing to disturb the peaceful calm of God's rule in heaven*
- Who are the four living creatures directly around the throne? (Cf. Ezekiel 1:4-14; Isaiah 6:2-3) - *Ezekiel has each with four faces - man, lion, ox and eagle with four wings with a wheel full of eyes; Isaiah's - six wings; these are cherubim or seraphim, eyes represent angel's awareness of what is happening, agents of God, four categories - God's ruling over all creation*
- Why is it important that they proclaim God as "Holy, holy, holy"? - *triune God – Holy, Holy, Holy; Lord, God, Almighty; who was, who is, and is to come (threefold 3's)*
- What is slightly different about the elders praise before the throne? - *lay their crowns - surrender all glory to him; they declare God is worthy of praise as the creator of all things*

(Queen Victoria of England wanted to be alive at the Savior's second coming because, as she said, "I would so dearly love to lay my crown at his feet.")

- Compare our song of praise the *Te Deum* on page 48 in the Hymnal to what John records. - *very close reference to this chapter - worship, angels, cherubim, seraphim, holy, holy, holy, apostles and prophets; triune God, details the Son's work; bring us to glory*

2. The Book of the Seven Seals (5:1-5)

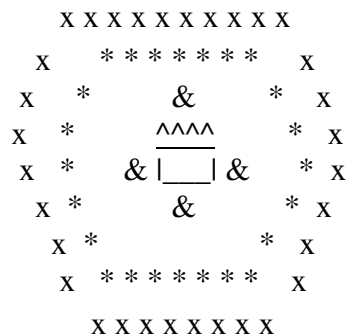
- What do the seals on the book tell us regarding future events (5:1)? - *scrolls usually had writing on one side, here both sides; seals were pressed into a wax ring holding scroll closed; the contents are closed, no one is to attempt to discover future events, those who practice magic arts thrown out from holy city (22: 15)*
- Who alone is able to open the book and its seven seals? (Cf. Genesis 49:9,10; Isaiah 11:1,10) *John wept - church experiencing persecution, troubled about final outcome, would the infant church be destroyed?; Jesus, the Lion of Judah and Root of David is worthy, he has power over all future things*

3. The Lamb Before the Throne (5:6-8)

- What immediately strikes John about the appearance of the Lamb? - *Lamb who was slain, reminiscent of O. T. sacrifices to atone for sin, Day of Atonement, Passover lamb - deliverance from Egypt*
- What are the seven horns and seven eyes? (see also 4:5) - *horns symbol of strength, eyes all-seeing; John says they are seven spirits or seven-fold Spirit who proceeds from Son*
- What is significant about Jesus' position before the throne? - *Lamb worthy to open scroll, at God's right hand, position of power and authority, state of exaltation*
- Does verse 8 teach us that our prayers should be addressed to the saints and angels? - *they worshiped the Lamb as they did the Father; incense is the prayers of God's people that are offered to Jesus*

4. The New Song of Praise to the Lamb (5:9-14)

- What did the Lamb's redemptive work accomplish? - *seven passages in the O. T. regarding a new song referring to God's salvation (Ps.98:1); new song of praise for gospel (new covenant); his blood purchased us so that we belong to God - Christ's sacrificial death is central to our salvation*
- Here we are introduced to the four-fold description of the earth and its people. (See also 7:9, 10:11, 11:9, 13:7, 14:6, 17:15) - *four is the symbolic number of the earth and its people; emphasizing Christ's redemptive work for all people*
- In what sense are those redeemed by Christ a "kingdom" and "priests," and how will they "reign on earth"? - *as a kingdom we reign in the world with Christ through faith in him; as priests we offer up sacrifices of prayers and praise because of Christ's sacrifice for sin; we reign with Christ as a kingdom and priests; what comfort for persecuted Christians, live by faith not by sight*
- Draw a picture of the scene John describes in verse 11.



- Another significant number in Revelation is the number 7 (3 plus 4). It represents God (represented as 3) and his covenant with the earth (represented by 4).
- Notice the millions of angel's praise in verse 12. Coincidence of seven-fold praise? - *here in the context of our salvation it seems right in place; Jesus was raised in power; received all things (wealth) in his exaltation; now has full use of his all-knowing wisdom; strength to rule all things; and honor, glory and praise (or blessing)*
- How does all this set the stage for the opening of the seven seals? - *every creature in heaven and on earth, all creation joins in a hymn of praise; four living creatures express their agreement, 24 elders worship him who will now open the seven seals*
- Compare our songs of praise before Communion, pages 34-35 in the Hymnal. Why are they appropriate praise before we receive Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament? - *(Notice words before the Sanctus) then we join in the song of angels - Holy, Holy, Holy - all glory from the whole earth; Christ, the Lamb of God takes our sins away - purchased us with his own blood*

Conclusion: What "pictures" of Jesus do our minds conjure up, the pictures based on his holy Word?