



#52 Revelation chapter 3-7

BRC
Read the Bible. Follow Jesus

Bible Reading Class

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A Bible Reader's Conviction

- *All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV)*

A Blessed Journey

1. May you study God's Word with a reverent heart and walk in His will.
2. May the Word of the Lord prosper, and may He add to the church those who are being saved.
3. May the Lord bless your days of reading Scripture.

B R C

Read the Bible. Follow Jesus

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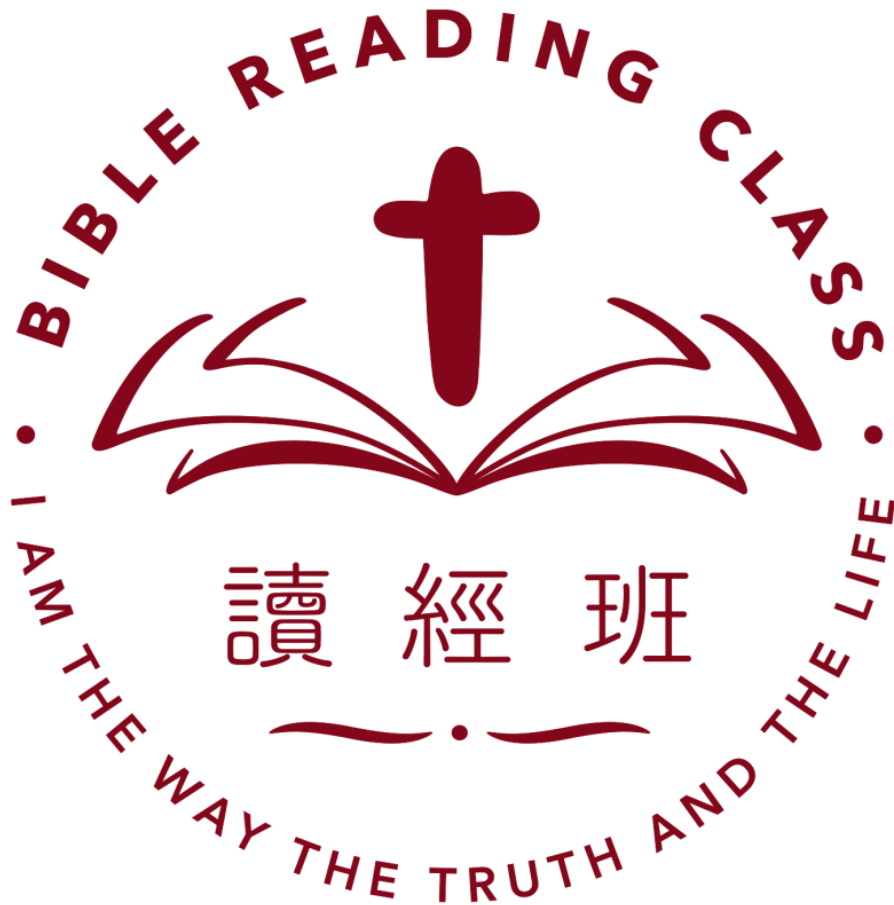


The Guiding Principles of BRC



- Christ-Centered
- Bible-Based
- Mission-Minded

BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



- I'll complete weekly reading assignment
- I'll watch weekly teaching video in its entirety
- I'll complete weekly quiz (closed book)

The Structure of the 27 Books of the New Testament

three Synoptic
Gospels

John

Four Gospels

Acts

Thirteen Pauline
Epistles

Other Nine
Epistles

Five Books of Historical Narrative

Twenty-two Books of Doctrinal Teaching



Revelation Chapter 3-7

1. The Church in Ephesus

(Toiling and Persevering, yet Having Forsaken First Love)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 - 1) **Ability to discern true from false**: You have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.
 - 2) **Ability to endure hardship**: You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.
 - 3) **Ability to hate what the Lord hates**: But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.
- **Jesus' rebuke:**
 - Having Forsaken Your First Love: Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first.

1. The Church in Ephesus

(Toiling and Persevering, yet Having Forsaken First Love)

- **Jesus' command:**
 - **Reclaim your first love**: Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.
- **Jesus' warning:**
 - **Removal of the church**: If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.
- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.
- **Application:**
 1. Strengthen the foundation of truth, so that one is able to discern true from false apostles (preachers).
 2. Do something concrete that demonstrates love for the Lord and love for brothers and sisters in Christ.

2. The Church in Smyrna (Afflicted and Poor, yet Truly Rich)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 1. Enduring affliction: I know your afflictions.
 2. Spiritual richness: I know your poverty—yet you are rich!
- **Jesus' rebuke: None.**
- **Jesus' encouragement:**
 - Do not fear suffering: Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. The devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days.

2. The Church in Smyrna (Afflicted and Poor, yet Truly Rich)

- **Jesus' command:**
 - Be faithful even to the point of death: Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your crown.
- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.
- **Application:**
 - The practice of faithfulness: the more unfavorable the circumstances, the more faithful we must be to the Lord — demonstrating this through Bible reading, prayer, service, giving, and evangelism.



Polycarp Of Smyrna

- Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, martyred AD 156 — burned at the stake for refusing to worship the Roman emperor.
- On his farewell, he said "I bless you Father for judging me worthy of this hour, so that in the company of the martyrs I may share the cup of Christ."

The Fish Symbol: Born During a Time of Church Persecution



= Greek word for "Fish"

Ἰησοῦς = Jesus Χριστός = Christ Θεός = God

Υἱός = Son Σωτήρ = Savior

GREEK TO ENGLISH	I	X	Θ	Υ	Σ	TRANSLITERATION
	i	ch	th	u	s	

**"Jesus Christ,
God's Son,
Savior"**

Tom Earnest
01-10-2002
christian_fish.org
<http://www.earnest.com>



Pergamum

Where Satan's Throne Is

**The Temple of the
Emperor Trajan**

3. The Church in Pergamum (Holding Fast to the Lord's Name, yet Later Compromising)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 - **Did not renounce the Lord's word:** You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city—where Satan lives.
- **Jesus' rebuke:**
 - 1) **Compromising with other religions:** Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality.
 - 2) **Compromising with the world:** Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

3. The Church in Pergamum (Holding Fast to the Lord's Name, yet Later Compromising)

- **Jesus' warning:**
 - Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.
- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.
- **Application:**
 - In your own faith, are there areas where you have compromised with other religions?
 - In your daily life, in what ways have you compromised with the world?

4. The Church in Thyatira (Doing Much Good, yet Tolerating a False Prophet)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 - 1) **Good deeds**: I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance.
 - 2) **Growing in good works**: I know that you are now doing more than you did at first.
- **Jesus' rebuke:**
 - **Tolerating Jezebel**: Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.

4. The Church in Thyatira (Doing Much Good, yet Tolerating a False Prophet)

- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations.
- **Application:**
 - 1) Am I "tolerating a Jezebel" — allowing people who should not have influence in the church to influence others?
 - 2) Compared to before, am I "doing more good works than at first"?

5. The Church in Sardis (Having a Reputation of Being Alive, yet Actually Dead)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 - **A few who remain faithful to the Lord:** Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy.
- **Jesus' rebuke:**
 - **A name only:** I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.
 - **Nothing complete:** I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God.

5. The Church in Sardis (Having a Reputation of Being Alive, yet Actually Dead)

- **Jesus' command:**
 - **Obey the Lord's word:** Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent.
- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - 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.
- **Application:**
 - Refuse to be a Christian in name only. Is there something I know the Bible teaches — something I ought to be doing — that I have continually failed to do? Begin doing it today!

6. The Church in Philadelphia (Keeping the Lord's Word, an Open Door)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open.
- **Jesus' commendation:**
 - A little strength: I know that you have little strength.
 - Keeping the Lord's word: Yet you have kept my word.
 - Not denying the Lord's name: And have not denied my name.
- **Jesus' rebuke: None.**

6. The Church in Philadelphia (Keeping the Lord's Word, an Open Door)

- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it.
- **Application:**
 - Practice acknowledging the Lord's name in every situation — confessing that you are a Christian.

7. The Church in Laodicea (Thinking Itself Rich, yet Truly Poor)

- **Jesus' self-description:**
 - These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.
- **Jesus' commendation: None.**
- **Jesus' rebuke:**
 - Lukewarm: I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other!
 - Self-satisfied with wealth: You say, "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

7. The Church in Laodicea (Thinking Itself Rich, yet Truly Poor)

- **The reward for the one who is victorious:**
 - To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne.
- **Application:**
 - Am I a fervent Christian, or a lukewarm one? Do a few things that you would not do when lacking zeal — let your actions demonstrate your devotion.
 - Do a few things that humble yourself; do not be self-satisfied with your own wealth and become proud in your heart.

What Was the Source of Laodicea's Confidence?

- *"You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see." (Revelation 3:17-18, NIV)*
- After the death of Alexander the Great, his empire was divided among four of his generals. The general Seleucus founded the Seleucid Empire in Syria. In honor of his father Antiochus and his mother Laodice, he established many cities bearing their names, including the city of Laodicea in the Lycus Valley of Asia Minor (see also the commentary on Colossians).
- Laodicea was one of the financial centers of the Roman Empire, with an abundance of banking establishments and a thriving marketplace. It was also renowned for its textile dyeing and medicine. The mineral-rich waters of the Lycus River produced brilliantly colored dyes, making its cloth highly prized for garments. Laodicea also had an advanced medical school, particularly noted for its expertise in treating eye diseases.

What Was the Source of Laodicea's Confidence?

- In the church at Laodicea, the congregation enjoyed high incomes, wore beautiful clothing, and had access to the finest medical care. Looking around at their members' material wealth and high education, they felt proud. Their outlook was worldly — and though they still sang hymns, prayed, and attended gatherings, their hearts toward the Lord had long grown lukewarm. Sounds a little like your church, doesn't it?
- To such a church, the Lord Jesus said: "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked!" You claim to be wealthy? "I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich!" You claim your clothes are beautiful? "Buy white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness!" You claim to have advanced medicine and skill in treating eye diseases? "Buy salve to put on your eyes, so you can see!"
- The self-assured church of Laodicea, when brought before Jesus, found itself utterly worthless — all its confidence gone. She was poor, blind, and naked, yet deluded herself into thinking she was rich. When a church measures itself by worldly standards, something truly astonishing happens!

An Example of "Misinterpretation"

- Whose door is Jesus knocking on?
- *"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne." (Revelation 3:19-21, NIV)*
- **The misinterpretation:** Many Christians use Revelation 3:20 in evangelism, saying: "Behold, Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart! Will you open the door and receive the Lord?" Have you ever made this same mistake?
- In fact, these are words Jesus spoke to the church in Laodicea. Not to seekers, but to Christians. Not calling them to believe, but calling them to repent. Not knocking on an individual's door, but knocking on the church's door. To that lukewarm church — do you hear the Lord Jesus knocking: "Bang! Bang! Bang!"? The Lord is calling you to repent and to be victorious!



Reflection Point

What the Spirit Says to the Churches

- "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)
 - **One phrase repeated seven times:** To each of the seven churches in Asia, the Lord Jesus concluded every message with the words: "Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches." It is clear that these words were not spoken to just one church, but to all the churches. Any church that has ears ought to hear what the Lord Jesus says through the Holy Spirit!
1. Jesus warns the church in Ephesus not to lose its first love — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 2. Jesus encourages the church in Smyrna to endure affliction and be faithful even to the point of death — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 3. Jesus commands the church in Pergamum to repent quickly and stop following false prophets — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 4. Jesus rebukes the church in Thyatira for tolerating Jezebel in teaching the Lord's servants — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 5. Jesus rebukes the church in Sardis for having a reputation of being alive while actually being dead — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 6. Jesus commends the church in Philadelphia for having little strength yet keeping the Lord's word — whoever has ears, let them hear!
 7. Jesus condemns the church in Laodicea for being lukewarm, naked, and blind, yet thinking itself rich — whoever has ears, let them hear!

What the Spirit Says to the Churches

- Many Christians pursue the gifts of "speaking and hearing" — speaking in tongues, hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. But have they truly heard the Holy Spirit's voice? We say respectfully: that is doubtful. What is not in doubt is that the Holy Spirit has already spoken to the churches in Revelation 2–3. The Lord Jesus issued the command: "Whoever has ears, let them hear!" The Spirit has spoken — are you listening?
- It is often said that Laodicea best represents the modern church: wealthy, self-satisfied, lukewarm — yet in reality poor, naked, and blind, so repulsive to the Lord that he would spit them out of his mouth. Yet the Lord has not abandoned Laodicea. He calls her to be fervent, not to keep the Lord waiting outside the door, but to hear his knocking and quickly open it. The Lord promises Laodicea that if she opens the door, he will come in and dine with the church in joyful fellowship. Has Laodicea heard the Lord knocking?
- The emphasis of Revelation 2–3 is "hearing"; the emphasis of chapters 4–5 is "seeing." We are to hear what the Spirit says to the churches, and to see the vision of heavenly worship — first the worship of the Creator, then the worship of the Redeemer. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever! Amen!

3 Elements of Worship



AN OPEN DOOR



AN OCCUPIED THRONE



AN ORCHESTRAL WORSHIP

Heavenly Worship

- **The First Worship: Worship of the Creator**

An Open Door:

- *"After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'" (Revelation 4:1, NIV)*
- **God's invitation**: A door was opened in heaven, and John received God's invitation to enter the heavenly court and behold the scenes of heaven. Everything John saw and heard originated from God's invitation. A simple truth: revelation must come from God — it cannot come from man. Man cannot invite himself; he can only be invited by God. Man cannot invent revelation; he can only transmit it.

Heavenly Worship

- **The First Worship: Worship of the Creator**

A Door Standing Open:

2. **What must take place after this:** Everything recorded from this point onward is what John saw in heaven — the content being "what must take place after this."
3. **Worship before vision:** Before John saw the visions of the last days, he first witnessed heavenly worship. Worship of God must come before the receiving of vision.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Cosmic Throne:**

- *"There before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne." (Revelation 4:2-3, NIV)*
- 1. **A throne set in heaven:** The first thing John saw was a throne — a royal throne — signifying that there is a ruler over the universe.
- 2. **The throne is not empty:** He also saw someone sitting on the throne, signifying that the throne already has its occupant. There is only one ruler over the universe: the true God who created all things.
- 3. **Seeing God's radiance, not God's form:** John looked upon the one sitting on the throne, yet could not make out a form — only a dazzling brilliance like precious stones. God is altogether glorious; no human can behold God's essential being, only his radiance.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Twenty-Four Elders**

- *"Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads." (Revelation 4:4, NIV)*

1. **Those who have seats before God:** Even angels must stand in God's presence — yet these twenty-four have seats, signifying a position of special honor.
2. **Those redeemed by God:** In Revelation, white garments represent God's redemption. These twenty-four are clothed in white, marking them as those who have been redeemed by God.
3. **The twenty-four elders:** Elders are representative figures. Twenty-four is two times twelve — representing the combination of the twelve tribes of the Old Testament and the twelve apostles of the New Testament, and thus the number of the redeemed.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Four Living Creatures**

- *"In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle." (Revelation 4:6-7, NIV)*

1. **Covered with eyes all around**: Following the symbolic language of apocalyptic literature, eyes represent sight, and sight represents knowledge. The four living creatures being covered with eyes signifies that they are full of knowledge — they see everything and know everything.
2. **Lion, ox, man, and flying eagle**: The prophet Ezekiel once saw a vision of four living creatures, each having four faces: a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. The difference is that each of the four living creatures John saw appears to have only one face. These creatures may be cherubim — the angels closest to God.

Heavenly Worship

- **"Holy, Holy, Holy!"**
 - *"Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.'" (Revelation 4:8, NIV)*
 - 1. **The Most Holy God**: In Jewish literary expression, repetition three times indicates the superlative degree. "Holy, holy, holy!" — the threefold "holy" signifies that the one the four living creatures worship is the most holy God.
 - 2. **The eternal "I AM"**: God's name is "Yahweh," meaning "I AM." God was, and is, and is to come — "is" being the very essence of his name. God is self-existent and eternal: the everlasting "I AM."
 - 3. **The Almighty**: The worshippers recognize that the one seated on the throne is he who holds sovereign rule over the universe — whose power is supreme, the Almighty God.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

- Holy, Holy, Holy, all the saints adore Thee
- Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea
- Cherubim and Saraphim, falling down before Thee
- Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

- **You Are Worthy**

- *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."*

(Revelation 4:11, NIV)

1. **"Worship" is "worth-ship"**: There is a well-known observation that "worship" derives from "worth-ship" — we worship the Lord not to flatter him or to obtain something from him, but because he is worthy of our worship.
2. **The reasons he is worthy of worship**: There are two primary reasons God is worthy of our worship: first, because of his creation; second, because of his redemption. We worship the one who sits on the throne because of his creation. We worship the Lamb who was slain because of his redemption.

A Song Based on Revelation 4

- Most High God, exalted Savior, You alone are worthy;
- Worthy to receive all glory, honor, glory, honor, and power.
- For You created all things; yes, You created all things; for You created all things.
- By Your will they were created and have their being. O Lord, You are worthy of all honor.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Second Worship: Worship of the Redeemer**
 - **The Scroll Sealed with Seven Seals:**
 - *"Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals." (Revelation 5:1, NIV)*
 - 1. **The significance of the seven seals**: An open letter requires no seal; the purpose of sealing a letter is to conceal its contents so that only the designated recipient may open it. "Seven" represents completeness — a scroll sealed with seven seals is therefore completely sealed shut. When a seal is applied, the name of the one who sealed it is stamped upon it, signifying that this scroll has been sealed by God himself.
 - 2. **The contents of the scroll**: The contents are "what must take place after this" (4:1) — that is, the future history of mankind. As the scroll is opened, the events of the future are progressively unveiled before John's eyes.

A Search Throughout the Universe:

"And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?' But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside." (Revelation 5:2-4, NIV)

Who is worthy to open the scroll? From the angel's proclamation, it is clear that opening the seven seals requires a certain qualification. Yet throughout all of heaven and earth, only one possesses this qualification — the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Lion of the Tribe of Judah:**
- "Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.'" (Revelation 5:5, NIV)
- **A title of the Messiah:** According to biblical prophecy, the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah. In terms of his human lineage, Jesus Christ is a descendant of the tribe of Judah, whose emblem is the lion. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" is therefore a messianic title referring to Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Lamb That Was Slain:**
 - *"Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne." (Revelation 5:6-7, NIV)*
1. **The Lamb**: A lamb is a sacrificial animal, offered to atone for sin. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
 2. **Looking as if it had been slain**: At first glance the Lamb bears the marks of blood and slaughter, signifying that this is a lamb whose sacrifice has already been made — the work of atonement completed. Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, having fully accomplished the atonement for the sins of the world. A slain lamb would ordinarily be lying down, yet this one stands and moves — signifying resurrection from the dead.
 3. **Seven horns, seven eyes, seven spirits**: Seven represents completeness; horns represent power; eyes represent knowledge. Seven horns, seven eyes, and seven spirits together signify that the Lamb is the one who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and possessed of the fullness of the Spirit.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Song of the Redeemer: The Hymn to the Lamb**
 - *"And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.'" (Revelation 5:9-10, NIV)*
1. **Redeeming all peoples with his blood**: The Lamb paid the price of his own blood to redeem those of the world who were indebted by sin. Those the Lamb redeemed come from every tribe, language, people, and nation — not limited to any single country or ethnic group. Jesus Christ gave his body and shed his blood to save all people on earth.
 2. **Making them to be a kingdom**: From the Old Testament to the New Testament and into eternity, God's redemptive purpose has always been to make people his own, restoring the relationship between God and humanity that was broken by the Fall.
 3. **Priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth**: Priests are those who may come before God. To be set apart for God means to be consecrated as holy. The purpose of redemption is to make people into God's own people — to bring them before God, set apart as holy. Through such people, God will carry out the way of Christ, reigning over the earth.

Heavenly Worship

- **The Lamb That Was Slain Is Worthy:**
- *"Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: 'Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!'" (Revelation 5:11-12, NIV)*
- 1. **Universal praise**: It began with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders singing the hymn to the Lamb — now all the angels in heaven join in the adoration of the Lamb.
- 2. **The Lamb as the object of worship**: According to the teaching of Scripture, only God alone is worthy of worship. John saw the heavenly hosts of angels all worshipping the Lamb, signifying that Jesus Christ is the true God and the rightful object of Christian worship.
- 3. **A sevenfold doxology**: The angels declare that the Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive "power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise." The angels praise the Lamb from seven aspects — seven representing completeness, making this a perfect and complete doxology.

Reflections on Worship in the Church

- John saw the door of heaven standing open, and a voice called him to come up. Once there, what unfolded before his eyes was the glorious worship of heaven — worship centered entirely on the Creator and the Redeemer.
- The four living creatures encircled God, ceaselessly crying out "Holy, holy, holy!" The twenty-four elders laid their crowns before the throne and fell down in worship before the Creator. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders together fell down and worshipped the Lamb who was slain, singing a new song: "You were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation!" Thousands upon thousands of angels joined the living creatures and the elders, crying out in a loud voice in praise of the Lamb who was slain. Then every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, said: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" And the four living creatures said "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshipped.
- Contrast this with the "worship" of the modern church: performance on stage, spectators in the seats; the sound system loud, the congregation barely audible; attitudes casual, the atmosphere worldly. There is neither universal praise nor prostrate adoration. But this is not even the greatest problem.

Reflections on Worship in the Church

- The greatest problem is that the church has neglected the central figure of worship. The center of worship is God — Christ — the Creator and Redeemer. The choir, the worship team, and the entire congregation all belong to the worshipping community. The only audience is God, seated on the throne, receiving the worship of all.
- The congregation are not spectators but worshippers. In designing worship, the question to consider is: how do we encourage the participation of the congregation? The role of the choir or worship team is not to perform, but to lead. How do we move the entire church to worship with both heart and voice, in sincere devotion? This tests the wisdom of those who design the worship service.
- The content of hymns and songs should center on God's creation and Christ's redemption — not on little flowers, little grass, and "I feel that God loves me very much." This is not to say that human feelings have no place in hymns, but simply that they should not be the theme. The selection and arrangement of songs — drawing the congregation to open their mouths in praise, to engage in worship, to learn new songs, and to give glory to God — all of this is a test of those who design the worship service.
- Worship must be lofty. Rising up above the highest heavens, with all gathered around the throne, lifting their voices in praise and giving glory to him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb — that is worship. Banging and clanging on earth, with a lively show on stage while the congregation sits mostly silent — that is performance.

Reflections on Worship in the Church

- Good worship has a healing function. We come to worship carrying a week's worth of weariness, life's worries, and even wounds of the soul — and in the midst of the whole congregation's praise rising to the Most High, our focus shifts from ourselves to God. Our perspective is broadened; we begin to see things through God's eyes. Worries gradually fade, anxiety turns to trust, and sorrow is transformed into joy. No one deliberately tells you that God loves you — yet you feel that God loves you. No one deliberately tells you that God heals you — yet you have already been healed by God. Only worship that is centered on God produces this kind of effect.
- Immersed in such worship, even before the pastor opens his mouth to preach, your heart is already filled with gratitude and you sense that coming was more than worthwhile. And if the pastor then feeds you with the Word of God — not preaching religion, theology, politics, or worldly trivialities, but rightly dividing the word of truth and applying it solidly and practically to daily life — you will leave with a heart full of joy, grateful to have been part of such worship. Will you come back next week? Need you even ask!



The Scroll Sealed with Seven Seals

The End of All Things

- **Revelation means "unveiling"**
 - The word "revelation" in its original language means "to uncover" or "to unveil." According to God's will, John received visions on the island of Patmos. In these visions, God unveiled mysteries that had previously been hidden, allowing mankind to know "what must take place after this" — that is, the end of all things. As the Lamb opens the seven seals, the hidden mysteries are revealed one by one. The book of Revelation is therefore John's "record of visions."
- **What must take place**
 - According to God's will, this world will one day pass away. A series of events will unfold, and then the end of all things will come. Revelation refers to these future events as "what must take place," signifying that God has already decreed his purposes and these things will certainly come to pass.

The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **The Lamb opens the seven seals**
- These "things that must take place" are written on a scroll sealed with seven seals. A search was conducted throughout heaven and earth, and no one was found who could open the seven seals — and John wept because of this. At that moment, one of the twenty-four elders pointed out that the Lamb who was slain had triumphed and was worthy to open the seven seals. So the Lamb took the scroll from the hand of him who sat on the throne and opened the seals one by one. With each seal that was opened, events began to unfold.



The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **The First Seal Opened: The White Horse Rider — Conquest**
 - *"I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest." (Revelation 6:2, NIV)*
 - 1. When the Lamb opened the first four seals, with each seal a horseman appeared, and each horseman brought a different calamity upon the world.
 - 2. White represents conquest. The white horse rider appears in the posture of a conqueror — crowned, launching wars of aggression, conquering and continuing to conquer, subduing the world by force.

The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **The Second Seal Opened: The Red Horse Rider — Slaughter**
 - *"Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword." (Revelation 6:4, NIV)*
 1. Red represents bloodshed. The red horse rider appears in the posture of a killer — wielding a large sword, taking peace from the earth.
 2. He not only kills himself, but causes people to kill one another, staining the earth with blood.

The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **The Third Seal Opened: The Black Horse Rider — Famine**
 - *"I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, 'Two pounds of wheat for a day's wages, and six pounds of barley for a day's wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine!'" (Revelation 6:5-6, NIV)*
 1. Black represents famine. The black horse rider holds a pair of scales, signifying that food is scarce and must be carefully rationed.
 2. A day's wages could only buy enough wheat for one day's food, indicating that food prices have skyrocketed and a full day's pay barely suffices to survive. Barley is a coarser grain, cheaper than wheat but less nutritious — a day's wages could buy three times as much. Oil and wine are everyday commodities that become rare and precious in times of famine, not to be wasted.

The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **The Fourth Seal Opened: The Pale Horse Rider — Death**

- *"I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth."*

(Revelation 6:8, NIV)

1. Pale represents death. The pale horse rider's name is "Death," and his companion is "Hades" — the place where the dead go.
2. This pair, master and attendant, employs every means available to kill a fourth of the people on earth.

The Four Seals and the Four Horsemen

- **Summary of the Four Horsemen**

1. The calamities brought by the four horsemen can be summarized by the phrase "man-made disasters." Conquest (wars of aggression), slaughter, famine, and death — the primary cause of all of these is mankind itself.
2. Before the world comes to an end, the catastrophes that humanity brings upon itself will increase dramatically. The days of plenty, prosperity, and peace will be over, and unprecedented disasters will come.
3. According to Revelation, the disasters at the end of the world are called "the Great Tribulation" (Revelation 7:14).

The Fifth Seal

- **The Fifth Seal Opened: The Martyrs Under the Altar**

- *"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?' Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their brothers and sisters, were killed just as they had been." (Revelation 6:9-11, NIV)*
1. The blood of sacrificial animals was to be poured out at the base of the altar. These people were slain for the word of the Lord — sacrificed like offerings — and their cry rises up from beneath the altar.
 2. White robes were given to them, signifying that they are people redeemed by God and also overcomers.
 3. They must wait a little longer until the full number of martyrs is complete. The completion of this number signifies that God has his own plan and timing — all things must proceed according to God's will, not according to human desires.

The Sixth Seal

- **The Sixth Seal Opened: Upheaval in the Natural World**

- *"I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. The heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place." (Revelation 6:12-14, NIV)*
- 1. When the sixth seal was opened, heaven and earth were shaken: a great earthquake, stars falling, the heavens rolling up, islands displaced from their positions — all emphasizing extraordinary and unprecedented changes in the natural world.
- 2. These upheavals caused the people of the earth to recognize this as the work of God. They sought shelter in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, crying out: "The great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?" (Revelation 6:17)

The Sixth Seal

- **The 144,000**
 - *"Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God. Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel." (Revelation 7:3-4, NIV)*
 - 1. **Two sealings**: Revelation records two sealings. The first occurs at the opening of the sixth seal, when an angel places God's seal on "the foreheads of the servants of our God." The second occurs at the opening of the seventh seal, when the beast from the sea places the mark of Satan on people's right hands or foreheads. This passage describes the first sealing.
 - 2. **The 144,000**: Who are the 144,000? This has generated much debate. Some cults, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, claim that the 144,000 refers to members of their own sect — a view that is certainly wrong. Beyond that, there are two main interpretations: first, because twelve tribes are specifically mentioned, these are Jewish believers who have been saved; second, 144,000 is a symbolic number and the twelve tribes is a symbolic expression, representing faithful believers who remain on earth during the Great Tribulation.

The Sixth Seal

- **Those Clothed in White Robes**

- *"After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'" (Revelation 7:9-10, NIV)*
1. Still within the period of the sixth seal, John saw in heaven a countless multitude clothed in white robes, crying out in praise of God and the Lamb. This is another record of heavenly worship, following those in chapters 4 and 5.
 2. **Why are they clothed in white robes?** Because "these are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The blood of the Lamb represents redemption, indicating that these are people who came to faith and were saved during the Great Tribulation.
 3. They come from every nation, tribe, people and language — once again emphasizing that God loves all people regardless of race or nationality, and that anyone who believes in Jesus may be saved.