

Making Sense of the Book of



REVELATION

Making Sense of Revelation



1. *Revelation and Its (Mis)Interpreters*
2. *John, His First Readers, and His Message*
3. *Unmasking Fake Truth and Power*
4. *So: What Does Revelation Mean for Us?*

A Prayer (Rev.5)

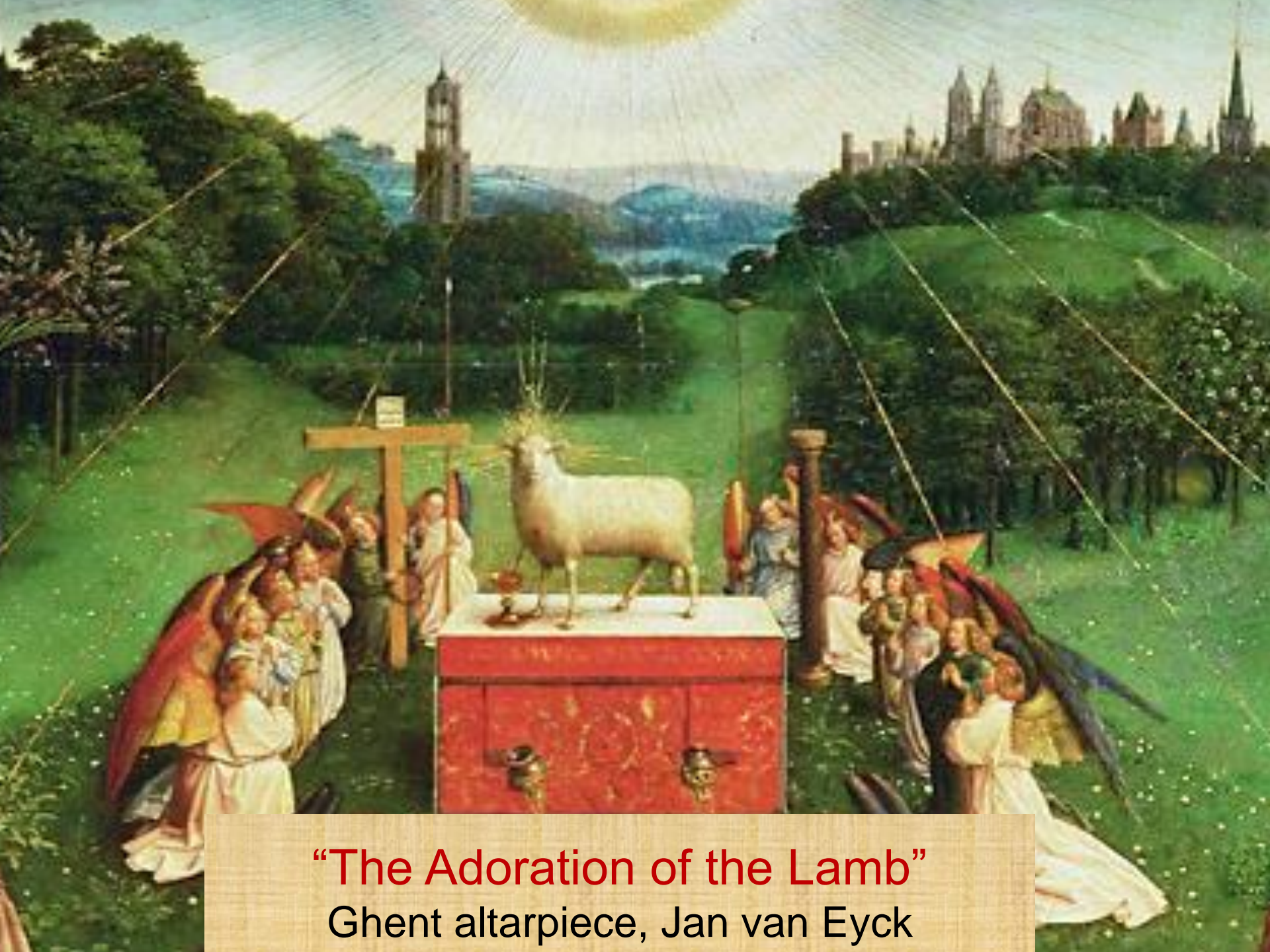
With all the multitudes gathered around the throne, gracious God, we praise your name:



“To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”

And to you, Lord Jesus, we bring our praise:

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, for by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.” Hallelujah. Amen.



“The Adoration of the Lamb”
Ghent altarpiece, Jan van Eyck

THE INITIAL VISION OF JESUS CHRIST



Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. ¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, ¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. (*chap. 1*)

Images of Jesus Christ in Revelation 1



Artwork by Pat Marvenko Smith © 1982, 1992 - www.revelationillustrated.com

THE “ANCIENT OF DAYS” IN DANIEL



- ⁹ As I watched, thrones were set in place,
and an Ancient One [*Ancient of Days*] took his throne,
his clothing was white as snow,
and the hair of his head like pure wool;
his throne was fiery flames,
and its wheels were burning fire....
- ¹³ As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a son of man
coming with the clouds of heaven.
He came to the Ancient One and was presented before him.
- ¹⁴ To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all
peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. (*chap. 7*)

SELF-DESIGNATIONS OF GOD AND JESUS



God:

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God. (1:8)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.” (21:6)

Jesus Christ:

“I am the first and the last, and the living one.” (1:17-18)

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” (22:13)

A QUESTION:



Chapter 1 tells us most of what we know of the author. What are we told about him in that chapter?



Patmos





The Monastery of St. John



John's Cave



Seven Churches of Revelation

— Chapters 2-3 —

- ➊ Ephesus
- ➋ Smyrna
- ➌ Pergamos
- ➍ Thyatira
- ➎ Sardis
- ➏ Philadelphia
- ➐ Laodicea

Island of Patmos: where John received the vision



ANOTHER QUESTION:



What did you notice about the structure of the letters?

THE STRUCTURE OF THE LETTERS



1. Church (*“To the angel of the church”*)
2. Description of Christ (*“The words of him who”*)
3. Commendation and/or Rebuke
4. Call to Repentance/Endurance/etc.
5. Consequence of Disobedience
6. Promise of Reward for Conquerors

DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST



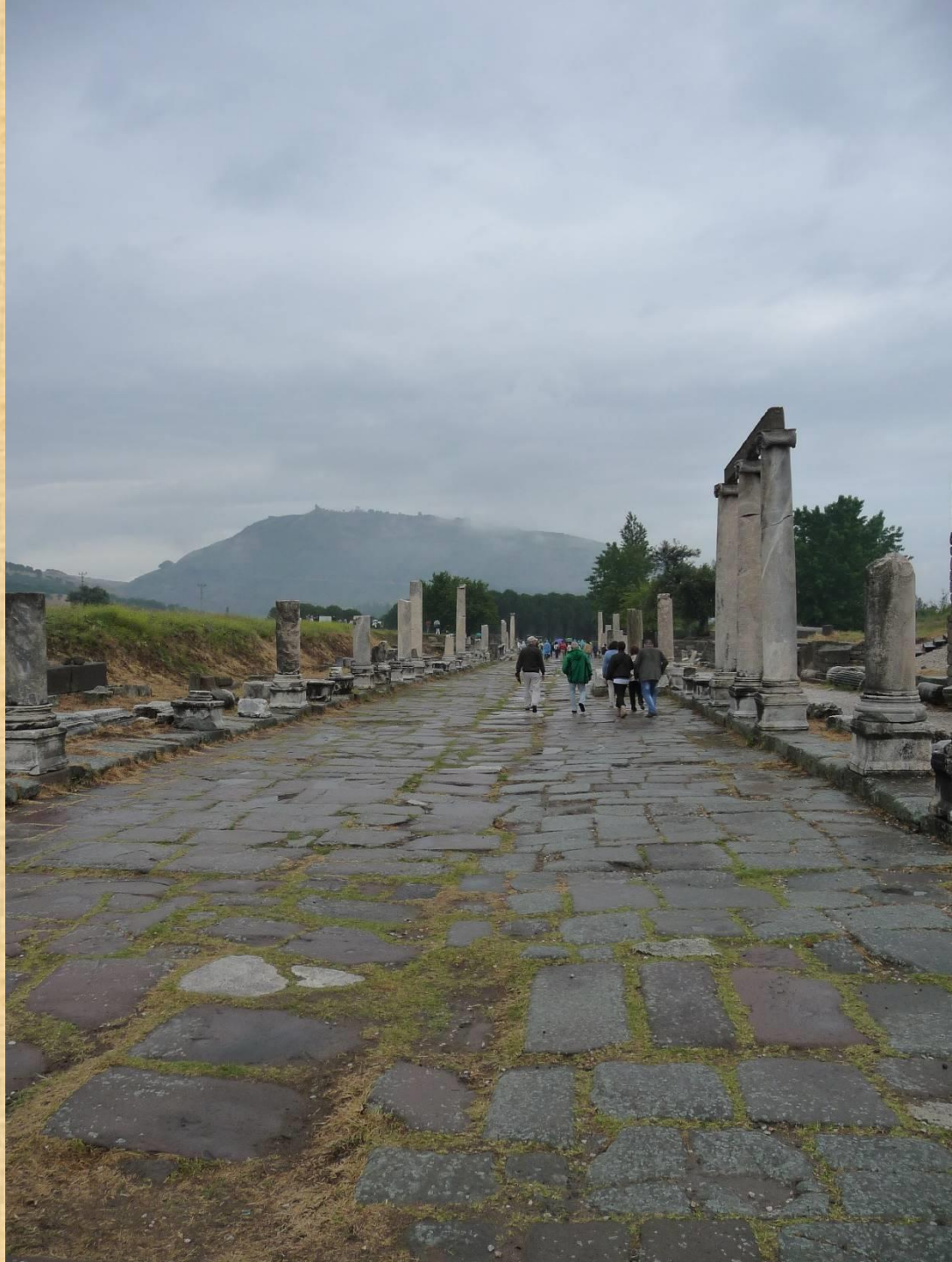
1. him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands
2. of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life
3. him who has the sharp two-edged sword
4. the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:.
5. him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:
6. the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens
7. the Amen, the faithful and true witness, origin of God's creation

ANOTHER QUESTION:



*What did you notice about
specific comments and
thoughts in the letters?*

PERGA MUM





*A Gondola Ride to
the Summit*

*A Theater Built
into the Hillside*



Foundation Walls for the Acropolis



A Temple in Honor of the Emperor Trajan



The Altar of Zeus





City Model in Pergamon Museum, Berlin

DANGER(S) FOR THE SEVEN CHURCHES



➤ Assimilation

“You have abandoned the love you had at first....Repent, and do the works you did at first.”

(Rev. 2:4-5 → Ephesus)

DANGER(S) FOR THE SEVEN CHURCHES



- Assimilation
- Persecution

“You did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas, my witness, who was killed among you.”

(Rev. 2:13 → Pergamum)

DANGER(S) FOR THE SEVEN CHURCHES



- Assimilation
- Persecution
- Complacency

*“I know your works: you are neither
cold nor hot.”* (Rev. 3:15 → Laodicea)

The Call to Laodicea:

“Behold, I stand at
the door and knock”

(Revelation 3:20)



THE DIVINE THRONE AND HEAVENLY COURT



There in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! ³ And the one seated looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵ Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; ⁶ and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. (chap. 4:2-6)

THE DIVINE THRONE AND HEAVENLY COURT



Day and night without ceasing they sing,
“Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come.”

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor
and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne,
who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall
before the one who is seated on the throne and
worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast
their crowns before the throne, singing... (*chap. 4:8-10*)

Holy, Holy, Holy



1 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!

God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

2 Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore Thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

4 All Thy works shall praise Thy Name, in earth,
and sky, and sea;

Making Sense of the Book of



REVELATION

THE “CYCLES OF SEVEN” IN REVELATION

Seals Chapters 6-7	Trumpets Chapters 8-11	Bowls (<i>Plagues</i>) Chapters 15-16
1 War	1 Hail and fire upon earth	1 Sores on followers of Beast
2 Internal strife	2 Mountain thrown into sea	2 Sea turned to blood
3 Economic threats	3 Burning star on rivers	3 rivers/springs turned to blood
4 Pestilence & death	4 Sun, moon, stars struck	4 Scorching heat from the sun
5 Persecutions	5 Bottomless pit opened Woe: locusts attack humans	5 Darkness
6 Sun, moon, stars, sky	6 Woe: cavalry with horses spewing fire, smoke, and sulphur	6 Foul frog-like spirits Euphrates dried up, making way for kings to assemble at Armageddon
Interlude: sealing of the 144,000 and the great multitude (<i>chap. 7</i>)	Interlude: Scroll and 2 witnesses (<i>chap. 10-11</i>)	
7 Silence → Trumpets	7 Announcement of God's victory	7 Announcement of the End Cities destroyed Islands, mountains disappear Heavy hailstones fall on humans
	Interlude: (<i>chap. 12-14</i>) Woman, Dragon, Michael 2 Beasts Rejoicing in heaven Warfare against evil on earth	Leads to: (<i>chap. 17-20</i>) Harlot (Rome) rides beast Rome destroyed Final destruction of Evil (Ones) Final judgment

Revelation 1:12-18

Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³ and in the midst of the lampstands I saw

one like the Son of Man,

clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest.

¹⁴ His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow;

his eyes were like a flame of fire,

¹⁵ his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace,

and his voice was like the sound of many waters.

¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars,

and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword,

and his face was like the sun shining with full force.

¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid:

I am the First and the Last.

¹⁸ I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!

And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

THE LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN REVELATION (Chapters 2-3)

The Structure of the Letters

1. Church (*"To the angel of the church"*)
2. Description of Christ (*"The words of him who"*)
3. Commendation and/or Rebuke
4. Call to Repentance/Endurance/etc.
5. Consequence of Disobedience
6. Promise of Reward for Conquerors

The Descriptions of Jesus Christ

1. Him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands
2. The first and the last, who was dead and came to life
3. Him who has the sharp two-edged sword
4. The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze
5. Him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars
6. The holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens
7. The Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation



Making Sense of the Book of Revelation

Coffee and Conversation
Oakmont Presbyterian Church
October 2019
James E. Davison

October 6 Revelation and Its (Mis)Interpreters

October 13 John, His First Readers, and His Message

October 20 Unmasking Fake Truth and Power

October 27 So...What Does Revelation Mean for Us?

“Some Reflection Questions for Next Week” (October 20) ***Revelation 6-18***

There is a lot of material in these chapters. I will focus especially on the figures mentioned below in order to understand how Revelation pictures the battles between God’s servants and the forces of Satan.

- There are three “Cycles of Seven” (seals, trumpets, and bowls) in Revelation. The chart will help as you read them. NB particularly the damage done to the earth and its inhabitants by these various catastrophes and plagues. (If we take this literally, what would be left of the world in a short time?)
- Chapter 12 describes how the Dragon seeks to destroy a woman, who is portrayed as a mother in two distinct ways. How is she protected each time she is threatened, and who/what do you think she represents symbolically?
- The Dragon shares his power with two Beasts (chapter 13). What dangers do they present for human beings? Who/what might John have identified them with?
- Chapter 17 introduces a different sort of woman. How is she pictured, and what does she represent for John? BTW: who will bring about her destruction?