

## December 4–10. Revelation 1–5: “Glory, and Power, Be unto ... the Lamb for Ever”

### Overview

Elder McConkie reminds us that we have been blessed with revelations and teachings that help us understand much of Revelations. But to speculate on things that we can't understand is “worse than useless.”

#### Bruce R. McConkie

"The issue... is to learn what God has revealed and unfolded in these apocalyptic writings and to lay the remainder aside, knowing that in our present state of understanding any speculation is worse than useless; such speculation not only leads to misunderstanding but so often becomes the basis of gospel hobbies which lead away from that sound view and perspective of all eternal truths... But let us remember that the book of Revelation was written to be understood.... Its true and full meaning will someday be revealed to the faithful and obedient saints; and the more we can learn now, with the interpretive insight already available to us, the better off we are." (DNTC 3:430-432)

We are blessed to be able to compare and reference Revelations with modern day scriptures:

D&C 29  
D&C 45  
D&C 77  
D&C 88  
D&C 101  
D&C 133  
1 Nephi 11-14  
JS – Matthew (JST Matthew 24)

We can also learn from similar revelations that have been given to other prophets

#### Nephi

1 Nephi 14:25-27

[25] But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them.

[26] And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and the have written them...

[27] And I, Nephi, heard and bear record, that the name of the apostle of the Lamb was John...

#### Moses

Moses 1:36,40

[36] And it came to pass that Moses spake unto the Lord, saying: Be merciful unto thy servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth, and the inhabitants

thereof...

[40] And now, Moses, my son, I will speak unto thee concerning this earth upon which thou standest; and thou shalt write the things which I shall speak.

Enoch

Moses 7:4

And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face... and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations.

Brother of Jared

Ether 3:25,27

[25] And when the Lord had said these words, he showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth

[27] And the Lord said unto him: Write these things and seal them up; and I will show them in mine own due time unto the children of men.

The Book of Revelations is not always in chronological order

Gerald N. Lund

"The basic structure of the [John's] vision is chronological... Not everything fits quite so neatly into this chronological line, however.... How do we explain these seeming anachronisms?

"As one studies the book [of Revelations], it becomes clear that there are places in the chronological flow where the Lord pauses to teach us important information before moving on. A teacher may do this as he moves through a lecture, pausing in his logical development to say, 'Now, before we go further, I need to make sure you understand something.' Such teaching interludes seem to apply to John's vision." ("Seeing the Book of Revelation As a Book of Revelation," Ensign, Dec. 1987, 52)

To the Seven Churches

John addresses 7 of the congregations in Asia Minor

Rev 1:11-13,20

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven

golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

JST Rev 1:20 ...The seven stars are the *servants* of the seven churches...

It is not clear why these 7 congregations are specifically addresses

The first three chapters of the book of Revelation were specifically addressed to seven branches of the Church in Asia Minor. It is unclear why these particular churches were singled out. While other branches of the Church had been established in Asia, these seven may represent the Church as a whole (the number seven being symbolic of completeness). (New Testament Student Manual, Religion 211–212, pg. 532)

Each of the 7 congregations is represented by a golden candlestick

Bruce R. McConkie

“Candlesticks carry light; they do not create it. Their function is to make it available, not to bring it into being.... The Lord is showing that his congregations on earth are to carry his light to the world. Christ is the Light of the world. ‘Hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do’ (3 Ne 18:24).” (DNTC, 3:442)

John bear his testimony of Christ to the churches

Rev 1:5-8

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

It seems that these 7 congregations are representative of all members of the Lord’s church. With that in mind let’s read John’s message to each of the 7 churches

Four of them receive acknowledgment for their faithfulness and good works

Rev 2:2-3, 13, 19, 3:8, 10

2:2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast

not fainted.

2:13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

2:19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

What are some of the ways that they demonstrated their righteousness and faithfulness?

(I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience  
thou canst not bear them which are evil  
thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith)

All attributes that we are commanded to strive for

Four of the churches are given some specific deeds for which they need to repent

Rev 2:4-5, 14-15, 20, 3:15-17

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

2:14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

2:20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

What are some of the commandments that they are struggling with and need to repent?

(thou hast left thy first love  
thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam  
teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication  
Because thou sayest, I am rich... knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked)

Same things we struggle with today. We need to keep Christ first in our lives and stay away from pride, false doctrine, and the things of the world.

To all 7 churches he gives specific bless to those who overcome the things of the world

Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28, 3:12, 3:21

2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God

2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

JST Rev 2:27 And he shall rule them with *the word of God; and they shall be in his hands as the vessels of clay in the hands of a potter; and he shall govern them by faith, with equity and justice, even as I received of my Father.*

In what way do you think that these 7 promises are similar?

In what way do you think that these 7 promises are different?

Robert J. Matthews

"The temple ceremony pertains to exaltation and eternal life, and references in the New Testament show that the members of the Church at that time knew that. For example, Peter reminded the Saints that they had been given 'all things that pertain unto life and godliness,... that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:3-4). Paul spoke of obtaining a 'crown of righteousness' (2 Tim 4:8), and of the saints becoming 'heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom 8:17). And John wrote of the faithful becoming 'kings and priests unto God' (Rev 1:6) to 'reign on the earth' (Rev 5:10). In the Church we recognize these as matters pertaining to the higher ordinances of the gospel that are administered in the temple....

"The persons to whom the epistles were written were already familiar with the doctrines. Consequently, those in the Church today who are familiar with temple ordinances can understand from these epistles that the saints in the New Testament times had the same temple blessings and ordinances." ("I Have a Question," Ensign, Sept. 1974)

## The Throne of God

John uses things that he is familiar with when attempts to describe the things which he sees

Rev 4:1-5

[1] After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

[2] And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

[3] And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

[4] And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

[5] And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

What are we to understand by the 24 elders?

D&C 77:5

Q. What are we to understand by the four and twenty elders, spoken of by John?

A. We are to understand that these elders whom John saw, were elders who had been faithful in the work of the ministry and were dead; who belonged to the seven churches, and were then in the paradise of God.

Rev 4:6-11

[6] And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

[7] And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

[8] And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

[9] And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

[10] The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

[11] Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

What are we to understand by the four beasts?

D&C 77:2

Q. What are we to understand by the four beasts, spoken of in the same verse?

A. They are figurative expressions, used by the Revelator, John, in describing heaven, the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts, and of creeping things, and of the fowls of the air; that which is spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal; and that which is temporal in the likeness of that which is spiritual; the spirit of man in the likeness of his person, as also the spirit of the beasts, and every other creature which God has created.

What are we to understand by the eyes and wings of the beasts?

D&C 77:4

Q. What are we to understand by the eyes and wings, which the beasts had?

A. Their eyes are a representation of light and knowledge, that is, they are full of knowledge; and their wings are a representation of power, to move, to act, etc.

Book With Seven Seals

In chapter 5 John sees a book that is sealed with 7 seals.

Rev 5:1-5

[1] And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

[2] And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

[3] And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

[4] And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

[5] And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

Who is the Lion of Judah, the root of David?

Both of these phrases are titles of Jesus Christ. (see Genesis 49:8–10; Matthew 1:3; Hebrews 7:14)

What are we to understand by the sealed book?

D&C 77:6

Q. What are we to understand by the book which John saw, which was sealed on the back with seven seals?

A. We are to understand that it contains the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence.

What are we to understand by the seven seals?

D&C 77:7

Q. What are we to understand by the seven seals with which it was sealed?

A. We are to understand that the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh.

The sealed book contains, "the revealed will, mysteries, and works of God," in thousand year increments. That's a lot but John manages to summarize each in a verse or two.

It's great to know the meaning of the seven seals which includes the four horsemen. If you google this you will see lots of speculation.

The next lesson will cover the 7 seals, or the 7 time periods