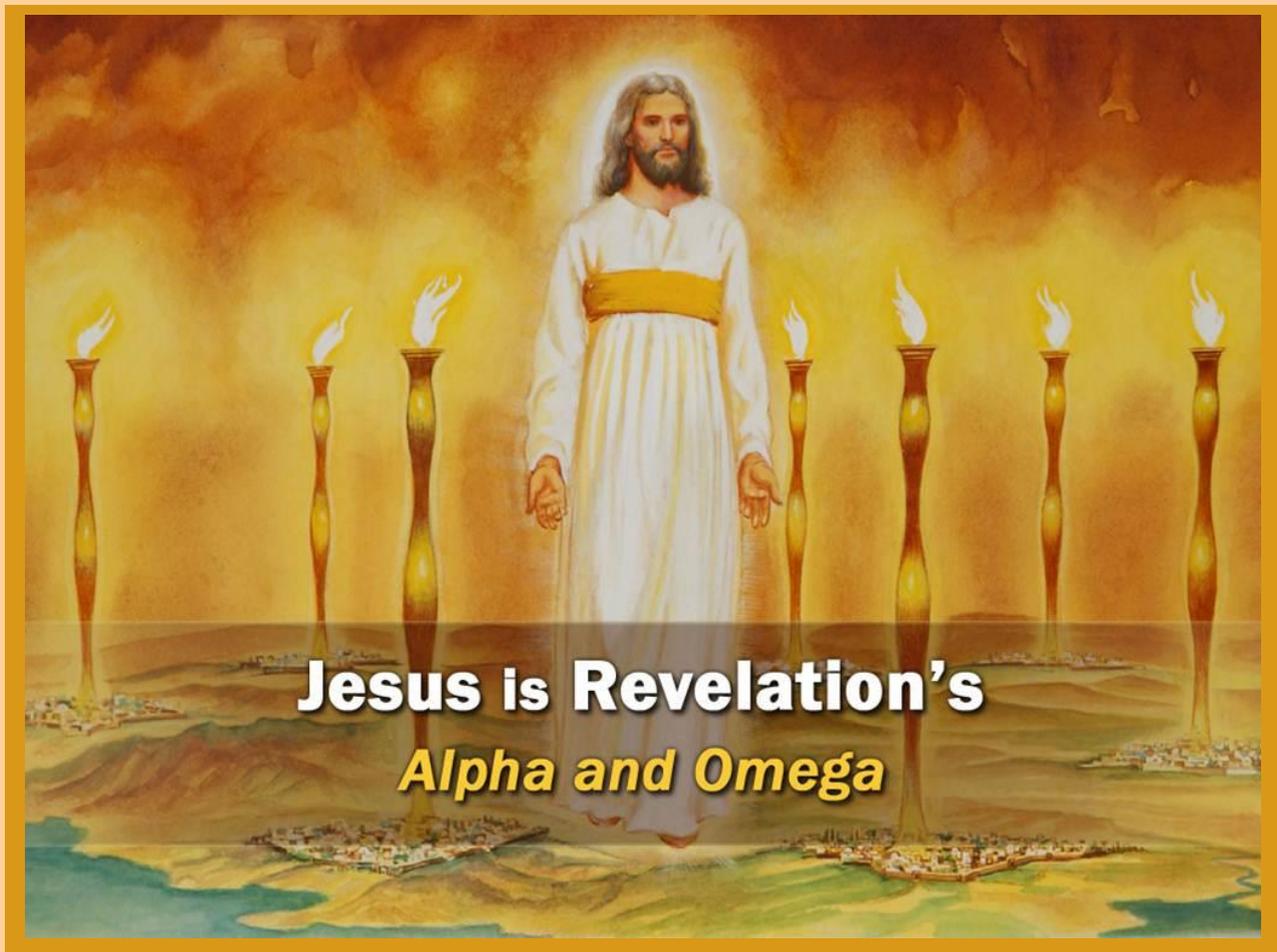


The First Vision of
Revelation



Jesus is Revelation's
Alpha and Omega

2 in a series

Introduction

The Book of Revelation is steeped in Old Testament imagery and language. In order to better understand Revelation and its symbols we need to better understand the sections of holy scripture that Revelation is referencing.

In this study we'll look at the first of seven key scenes in Revelation that relate to the Old Testament Sanctuary. Understanding these scenes - and how they help us navigate the Book of Revelation – provide a significant advantage in understanding Revelation's meaning for us today.

In addition, the claims Jesus makes about Himself in the opening chapter of the Book of Revelation help us to see how He is our Creator, Redeemer, and soon-to-return King.

Overview of Session #2 (Revelation 1:10-20)

1. How John received these incredible visions
2. The fascinating imagery of Revelation
3. The deliberate structure of Revelation (related to the Old Testament Sanctuary)
4. Jesus Christ's claims about Himself in Revelation

1. How John Received his Visions

The book of Revelation is essentially a series of visions shown to the Apostle John by the resurrected Jesus Christ. This is illustrated in the following verse.

Revelation 1: 10-13 - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man,...

Question 1: First John heard a voice (v10) and then he saw what? _____

Question 2: Who were these messages for? _____

Here John is suddenly caught up in a heavenly vision and from behind he **hears** a loud voice. Then he is told to write in a book what he **sees** and also reveal its meaning. This is a pattern commonly found in Revelation. From our personal spiritual perspective, we can apply this principle to our own lives. First we hear about God and His wonderful message to humanity but it only makes sense to us as we apply the words to our individual, spiritual experience.

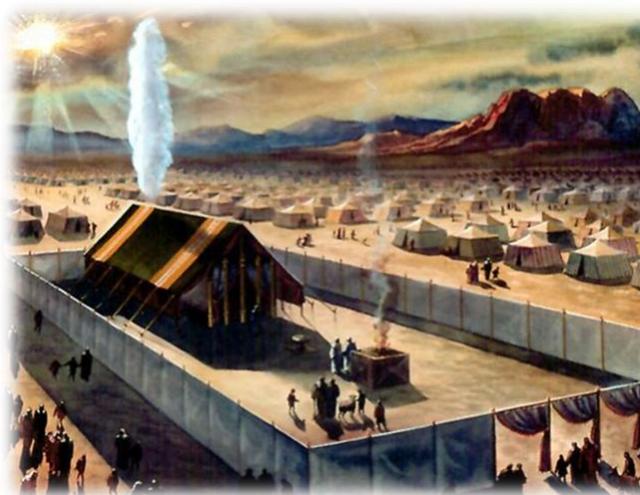
As we read this amazing encounter with Jesus from the aged prophet at a time when he was a prisoner on the Island of Patmos, we notice some important points which are revealed in chapter 1.

- *He is in the Spirit and hears a voice – verse 10*
- *He sees a vision which he is told to write down - verses 11-19*
- *The message applies to John's time as well as the future. – verse 19*
- *Revelation's imagery is symbolic – verse 20*
- *The message is vitally important – verse 3*

Some of Revelation is symbolic and some is obviously literal. **The symbolic aspects are not meant to be frightening but represent important spiritual truths.** Having grown up in a Jewish environment, John is very familiar with the symbols used in these visions.

Question 3: What is the purpose of using symbols in the Book of Revelation? _____

*The Sanctuary in
Old Testament times*



2. The Imagery of Revelation

Imagery of the Jewish Sanctuary is used throughout Revelation. This imagery is not so well understood in our time today but was common knowledge to John and the believers of his day. The Sanctuary (or temple) was the main building in Jewish religious life for over 1,500 years. The following verses mention many aspects of the Sanctuary.

Revelation 1:12-18 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw **seven golden lampstands**. And in the midst of the seven lampstands **One like the Son of Man**, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes like a flame of fire: His feet were like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters: He had in his right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death."

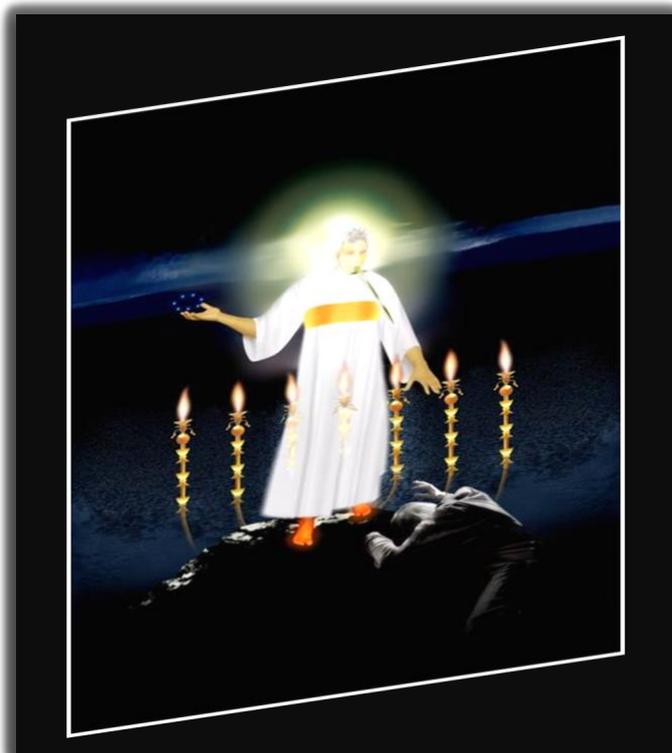
Question 4: Can you identify what article(s) of furniture mentioned here is a symbol of the Jewish sanctuary? _____

Question 5: Who in this vision is the "One like the Son of Man"? _____

The imagery of the seven gold lampstands is referring to the seven-armed lampstand in the sanctuary which was known as the Menorah. Also in verse 13, we see Jesus dressed as a High Priest just like the priest who served in the sanctuary.

Question 6 How is Jesus dressed? _____

John's vision of Jesus





A priest in Old Testament times showing the two apartments of the sanctuary called The Holy Place and The Most Holy Place

3 The Structure of the Book of Revelation

There is a definite structure to the book of Revelation. It revolves around seven main scenes that use Old Testament Sanctuary imagery. Each of these seven 'Sanctuary Scenes' have important messages for the reader. The scenes are as follows –

Scene 1 – The Holy Place in the Sanctuary (Revelation 1:12-20)

This scene introduces the Seven Churches in chapters 2 & 3.

Scene 2 – Christ's Coronation in Heaven as King (Revelation 4 & 5).

This scene introduces the Seven Seals of chapters 6 & 7.

Scene 3 – Intercession in the Sanctuary (Revelation 8:2-6).

This scene introduces the Seven Trumpets from chapter 8 through to chapter 11.

Scene 4 – Judgment in the Sanctuary (Revelation 11:19)

This scene introduces the imagery of the great dragon fighting against God's chosen Remnant in chapters 12 to 14.

Scene 5 – Intercession in the Sanctuary Stops (Revelation 15:5-8)

This scene introduces the Fall of Babylon in chapters 16 to 18.

Scene 6 - Christ's Departure from Heaven as King (Revelation 19:1-16)

This scene introduces the Return of Jesus Christ, the Millennium and the Final Judgment from Revelation 19:17 to 20:15.

Scene 7 – The Most Holy Place in the Sanctuary (Revelation 21:1 to 22:5)

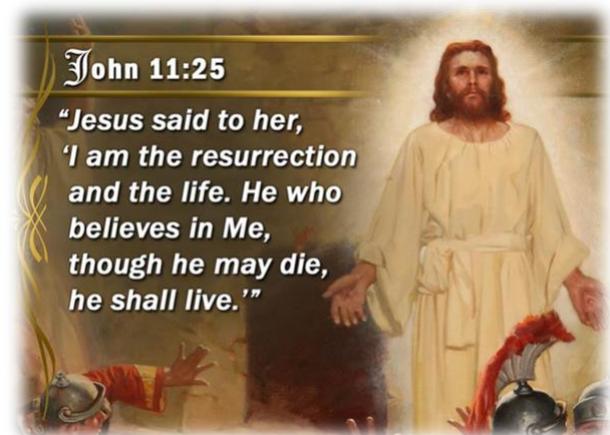
This scene introduces the Almighty God living with redeemed humanity for all eternity. Eternal peace on Earth and in the whole universe will be experienced forever. Revelation 22:6

We have noted that these sanctuary scenes were very familiar and easily identifiable to the original readers of Revelation. This imagery is not so easily recognised or even understood by the modern-day reader. With some historical investigation however, many of these important features can be understood by us today. As a result, the blessings that the original readers received from reading Revelation can be imparted to us today.

Question 7: Do you know the names of the two main sections of the Old Testament Sanctuary/Temple? (see Exodus 25:8 and Exodus 26:33. Perhaps also read Hebrews chapter 9 in the New Testament for some extra information on the Sanctuary and its relationship with Christ).

i) _____

ii) _____



Life, death and resurrection of Jesus

4 The Claims of Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation

We have seen that it was Jesus showing John these visions. As John hears and sees this vision, Jesus makes incredible claims about Himself.

1. *He has been resurrected from the dead (Rev. 1:5)*
2. *He loves human beings with a great passion (Rev. 1:5)*
3. *He has saved us from our sins through His death (Rev. 1:5)*
4. *He is the Ruler of the Earth (Rev. 1:5)*
5. *He will one day return to this planet to rescue His faithful followers (Rev. 1:7)*
6. *He has existed from eternity (Rev. 1:8, v18)*
7. *He is the God of the Old Testament (Rev. 1:13-14)*
8. *He has the keys of the grave and death (Rev. 1:18)*

Question 8: What does it mean to you for Jesus to have the keys of the grave and death?

All these claims made in the Book of Revelation are repeated in the New Testament writings. If you personally agree with these claims, then you are indeed a believer – a follower of Christ – and one of God’s special children on the pathway to eternal life in His kingdom. The Book of Revelation will become a comfort to you as you grow in understanding God’s plans for the future of planet Earth as well as your own personal eternal future.

Question 9: Can you see how Jesus truly loves you? _____

Question 10: Are you prepared to stand by Him and give your allegiance to Jesus? _____

