

REVELATION MADE RELEVANT!

Friday Night Bible Study with Fr. Ward





† Cities of the seven churches
— Major travel route



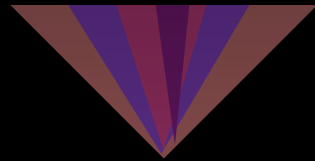
Introduction

Revelation: An Outline

- **Prologue (1:1–3)**
- 1. *Seven Messages to Seven Churches (1:4–3:22)*
- 2. *Seven Seals (4:1–8:5)*
- 3. *Seven Trumpets (8:2–11:19)*
- 4. *Seven Symbolic Histories (12:1–14:20)*
- 5. *Seven Bowls (15:1–16:21)*
- 6. *Seven Messages of Judgment (17:1–19:10)*
- 7. *Seven Visions (19:11–22:5)*
- **Epilogue (22:6–21)**

WORSHIP

Revelation 4



In Revelation 4, John sees that worship participates in the activity of heaven.

- ▶ Heaven is a place of worship
- ▶ When we worship God, we participate in a foretaste of our future before His throne.
- ▶ For this, the Spirit is given to us as a “downpayment” and “firstfruits.”
- ▶ Rev. 4 focus on God’s creative power while in Rev. 5 the focus is on His redemptive power

Revelation Chapter 4

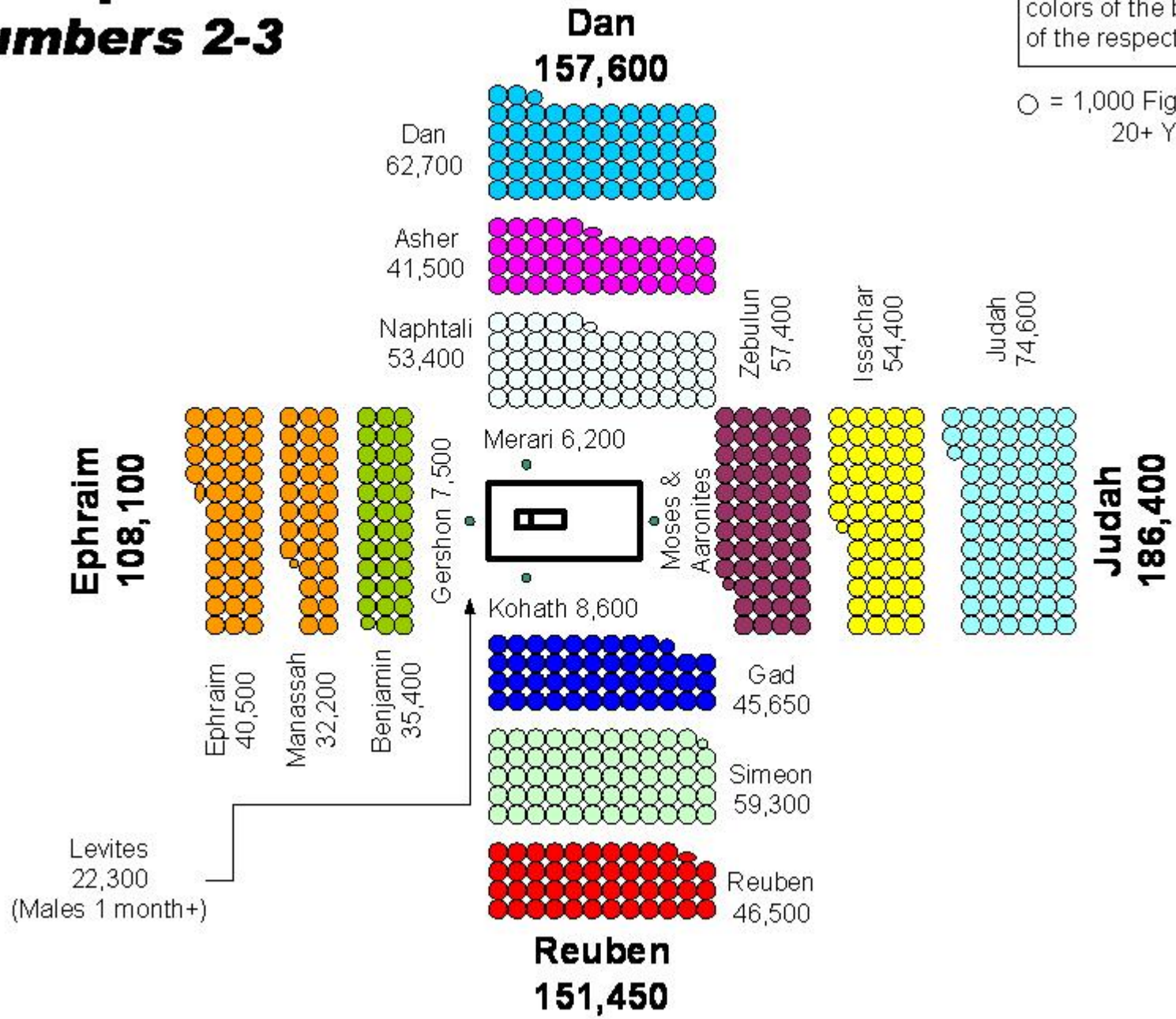
Enter the Throne Room



Encampments Numbers 2-3

Colors are close to the colors of the birthstones of the respective tribes.

○ = 1,000 Fighting Men
20+ Years



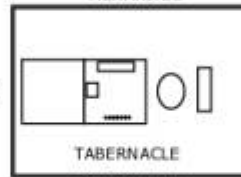
DAN
ASHER
NAPHTALI

NORTH SIDE
DAN
EAGLE



MERARITES

MOSES



TABERNACLE

PRIESTS

AARON

KOHATHITES

JUDAH
ISSACHAR
ZEBULUN



EAST SIDE
JUDAH
LION

WEST SIDE
EPHRAIM
OX

EPHRAIM
MANASSEH
BENJAMIN



GERSHOMITES

SOUTH SIDE
REUBEN
MAN



REUBEN
SIMEON
GAD

Breast-Plate




 Sardius Sardonyx Emerald
 Judah Issachar Zebulun




 Carnelian Sapphire Jasper
 Reuben Simeon Gad





 Chrysoprase Jacinth Amethyst
 Ephraim Manasseh Benjamin




 Chrysolite Beryl Peridot
 Dan Asher Naphtali




Chart #1


 Chrysoprase
 Ephraim


 Jacinth
 Manasseh


 Amethyst
 Benjamin

Encampment




 Peridot Beryl Chrysolite
 Naphtali Asher Dan


Tabernacle




 Jasper Sapphire Carnelian
 Gad Simeon Reuben


 Sardius
 Judah


 Sardonyx
 Issachar


 Emerald
 Zebulun

Heaven is a Temple in Revelation

- ▶ Tabernacle
- ▶ Ark of covenant (throne)
- ▶ incense altar, censers, incense bowls
- ▶ altar of sacrifice
- ▶ lampstands
- ▶ sea
- ▶ harps for worship

The Tabernacle

After this I looked and in heaven the temple, that is, the **tabernacle of the Testimony, was opened. Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues. They were dressed in clean, shining linen and wore golden sashes around their chests... And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. (15:5-8)**





They cry out the Trisagion (4:8):

- HOLY, HOLY, HOLY is the Lord God
- Isaiah 6:
 - Isaiah a holy priest in a holy nation
 - But when he sees the LORD
 - he cries, “...I am unclean!”
 - only grace purifies him for his mission
- When we realize how “wholly other” God is, we realize our poverty before Him

Ark of covenant

- ▶ Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and within his temple was seen the **ark** of his covenant (11:19)
- ▶ In OT, **THRONE** also was ark (e.g., 1 Sam 4:4: “...the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim”)



Incense altar, censers

- ▶ **5:8:** elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of **incense**, which are the prayers of the saints
- ▶ **8:5:** given much **incense** to offer, with the prayers of all the saints, on the golden altar before the throne. The smoke of the **incense**, together with the prayers of the saints, went up before God from the angel's hand



Lampstands

- ▶ 4:5: Before the throne, seven **lamps** were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God
- ▶ cf. 1:13: among the **lampstands** was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest





Altar of sacrifice

- 6:9: 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
- 9:13: I heard a voice coming from the horns **of** the golden **altar** that is before God
- 14:18: Still another angel, who had charge of the fire, came from the **altar**
- And I heard the **altar** respond



Sea

- Also before the throne there was what looked like a **sea** of glass, clear as crystal (4:6)
- And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name (15:2)

- He made the **Sea** of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits high...Below the rim, gourds encircled it--ten to a cubit. The gourds were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea. The **Sea** stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center (1 Kgs 7:23-25)
- the **Sea** and the twelve bulls under it (1 Kgs 7:44)



Revelation portrays heaven as a temple.

What do we do in temples?

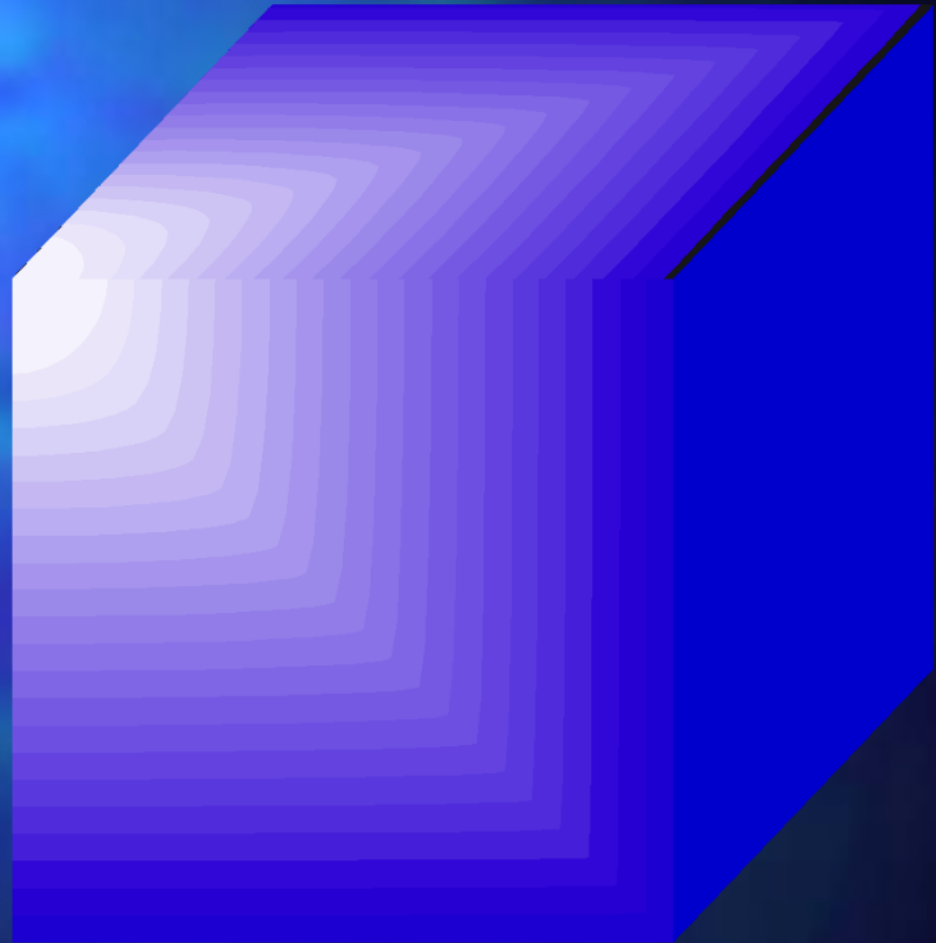
Harps for worship

- the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a **harp** (5:8)
- The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their **harps**. And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders (14:2-3)
- They held **harps** given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: (15:2-3)



Why is New Jerusalem shaped like a cube?

- In the Old Testament, this was the shape of the Holy of Holies
- We will dwell in God's presence without distraction, for ever and ever





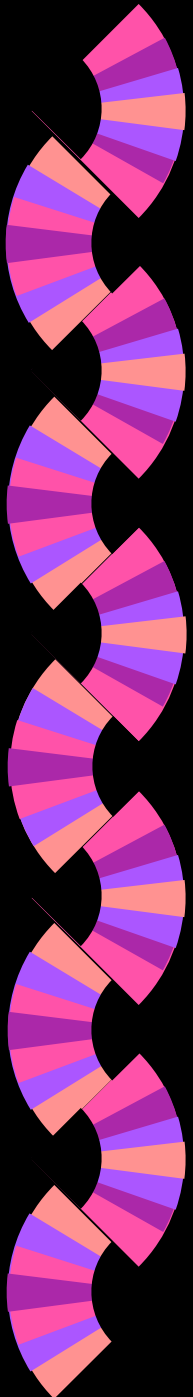
The description is not ornate...

- ▶ Caesar boasted in the splendor of his temple cult.
- ▶ Apocalypses sometimes reveled in details of God's glory (e.g., 365 heavens)
- ▶ Revelation just lets us know that **NO ONE** can compare with **GOD!**



How does John get to heaven?

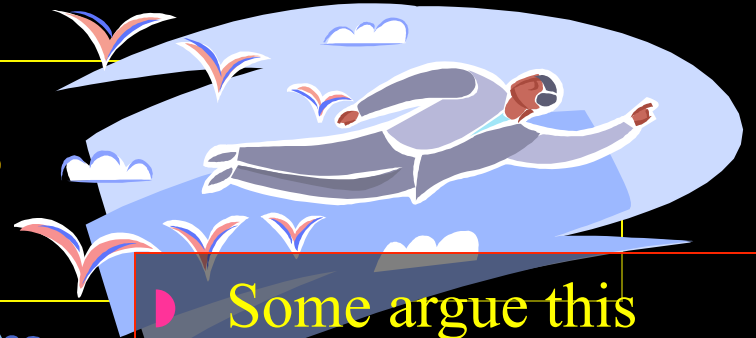
- Apocalypses often involve dangerous journeys to reach God's throne
- They often involve angelic help in the ascent
- But John was in the **Spirit (4:1-2)**
- As in (e.g.) Ezekiel 3:14: **The Spirit** then lifted me up and took me away
- 8:3-4: He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The **Spirit** lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance to the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. ⁴ And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain



*“Come up here” (4:1) resembles
call to Moses:*

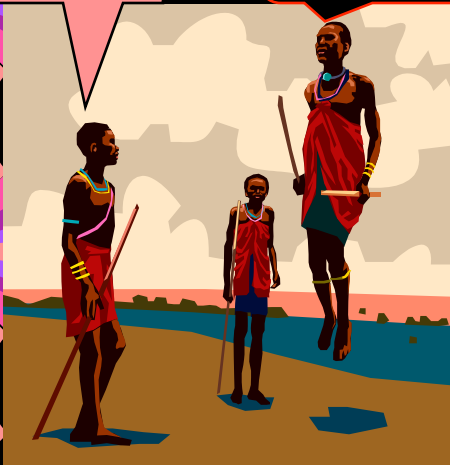
- Ex 24:12: The LORD said to Moses, “**Come up to me** on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone...”
- Context of **Bible’s first throne-vision**: and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.
¹¹ But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; **they saw God**, and they ate and drank (24:10-11)
- later tradition: Moses ascended to *heaven*

Is *THIS* the Rapture?



Oh oh
Fred was
right

YAHOO!



- Some argue this
- If one wants a Rapture before the Tribulation, it's the only place to stick one
- But WHO is caught up here?
 - John "comes" elsewhere
 - "Trumpet" voice elsewhere

Notice the Americans, who carry their briefcases with them

Who are the 24 elders?

- Surround throne like royal court, or chorus
- White robes: normally for worshipers, priests in temples
- who are these priests?
 - Angels? (ch. 15)
 - OT saints?
 - NT saints?
 - OT saints (12 tribes) + NT saints (12 apostles)= 24





Why 24?

- Maybe OT saints + NT saints (21:12-14)
- But probably from 24 courses of **priests** in OT (1 Chr 9; 24)
- In Asia Minor art, a small number of priests might represent a larger body of worshipers
- elders could stand as people's representatives before God (Ex 24:9-10)
- ALL God's people: kingdom and priests (1:6; 5:10)

Throne creatures

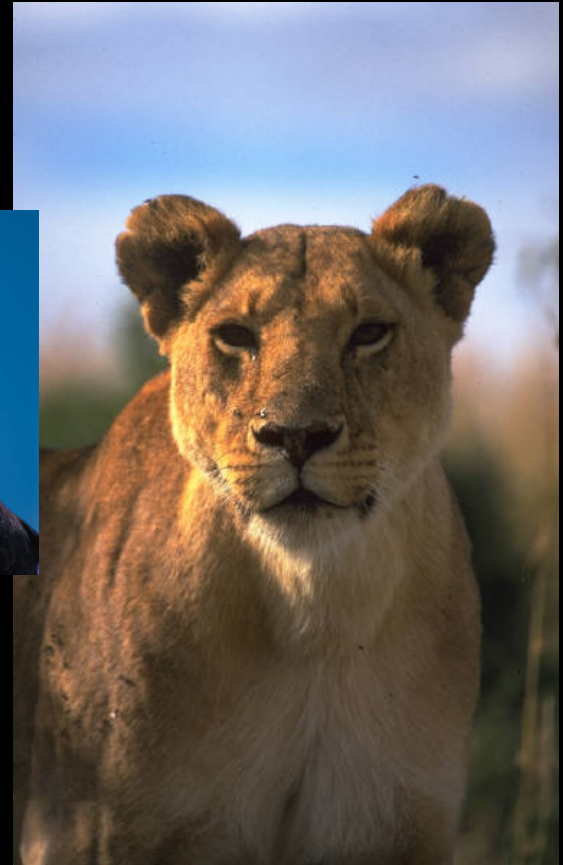
- Isaiah's seraphim (Is 6), Ezekiel's cherubim supporting God's throne (Ezek 1; 10; 11)
- draws on most regal and powerful of creatures



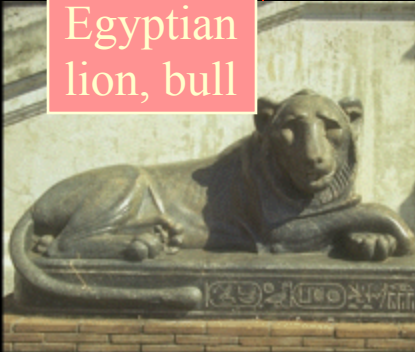
9th/8th century BCE
Assyrian cherub

Lion, bull (here calf), eagle and human

- In Ezekiel, though, each creature had all four faces

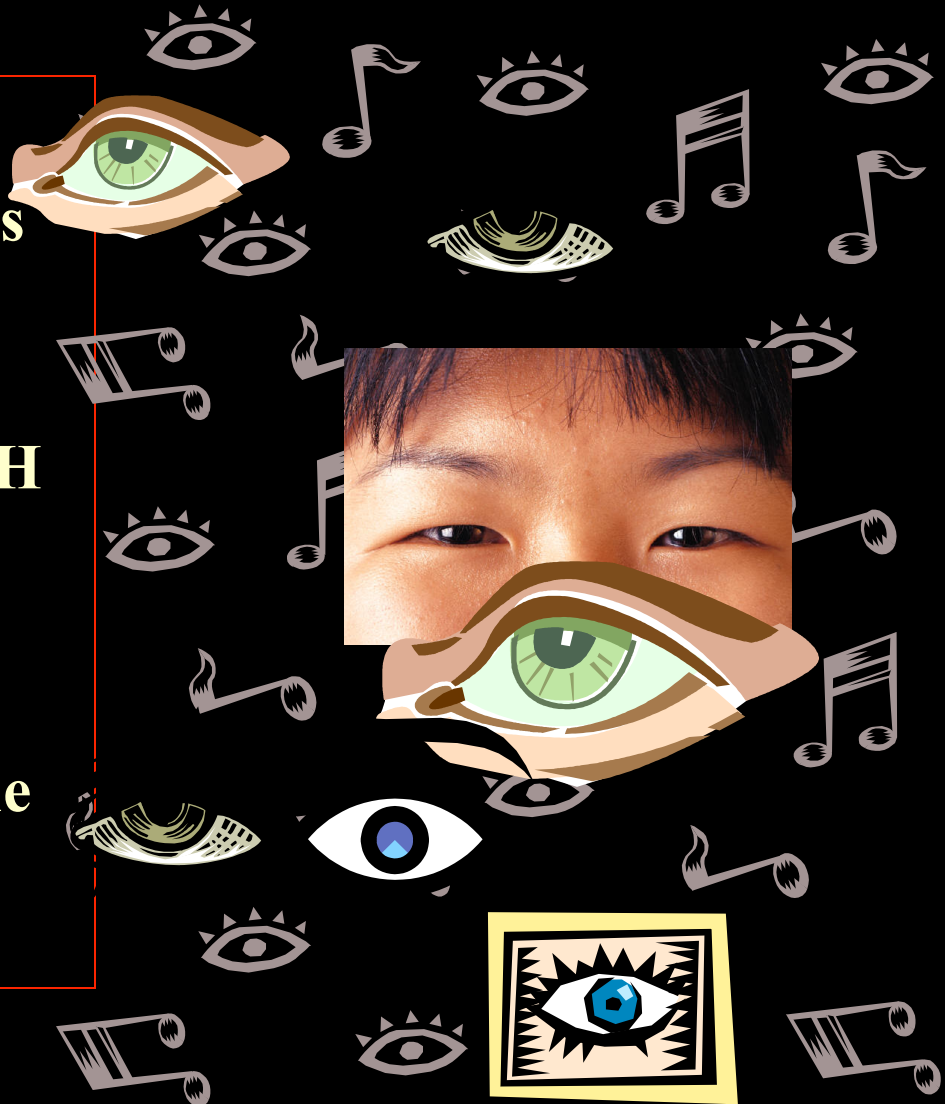


Egyptian lion, bull



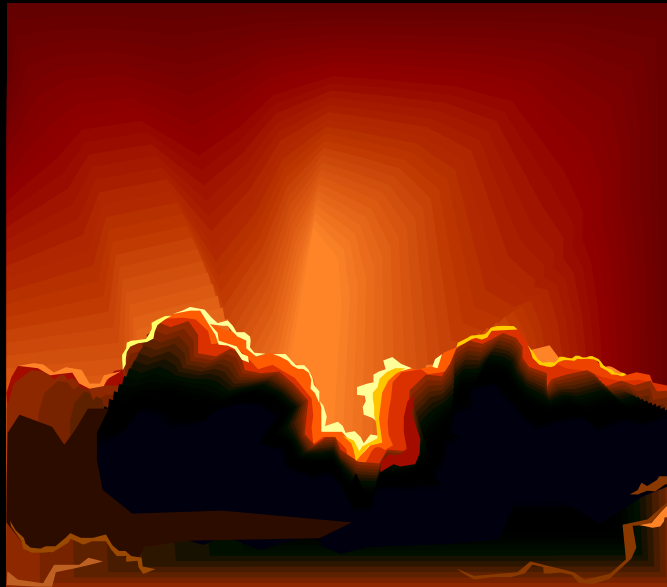
They are “full of eyes” (4:6)

- **Not like Greek myth**
- **Ezek 1:18: all four rims [of the creatures] were full of eyes all around**
- **NOTHING ON EARTH IS HIDDEN FROM THEM**
- **cf. Zech 4:10: These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth**



Glorious as these creatures are, they serve NO other purpose but to extol God's greatness!

- So praise matters!
- And God is incomparably bigger than we can imagine!



LION

OF JUDAH



REVELATION 5:5





The Lion of Judah



- ◆ **Gen 49:9-10**:... Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness--who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his
- ◆ **4 Ezra 12:31-32**: Messiah as a lion
- ◆ Throughout **Mediterranean**: image of power and conquest

Lambs, by contrast



- ▶ Typically images of *helplessness*
- ▶ *Slaughtered* lamb: sacrifice
- ▶ Passover lamb's blood protected Israel from plagues!
- ▶ (if a will: death first attested)

Yeshua is thus the model for sacrificial martyrdom



- ▶ 6:9-11: 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 number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed

Yeshua the Conqueror

- ▶ Yeshua “took” the Book (5:7; verb tense: dramatic action)
- ▶ Judaism: Angels offer prayers of saints to God (Tob. 12:15)
- ▶ Heavenly chorus here praises not Father, but LAMB (5:8)
- ▶ Lamb not only is worship (sacrifice) but receives worship!

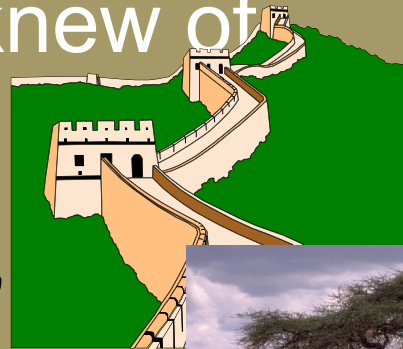
Hymns of Redemption

- ▶ Throughout Empire choruses sang Emperor's praise
- ▶ But Israel sang hymns to commemorate Passover redemption (Ps 113-18)
- ▶ By blood of new Passover lamb (5:9), now larger "*kingdom*" and "*priests*" (Ex 19:4-6)
- ▶ Contrast with Ex 19: redeemed from ALL peoples

Biblical world: Mediterranean, East Africa, Western Asia

But they also knew of

China



India



Africa further S.



Germans, Britons



Inconceivable then that all these peoples would be evangelized!

中國

Nations, kindreds, peoples, tongues



- 7 x Revelation includes this fourfold formula (in varying sequences)
- matches 3fold formula 6 x in Daniel (Dan 3:4, 7, 31; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14)
- 1st (Dan 3:4) is 4fold in Septuagint (Greek trans.)
- in some, worship image of beast (or Nebuchadnezzar)

But in others...



- Dan 7:14: Son of Man rules all these peoples
- 10,000 x 10,000 (5:11) = innumerable; from Dan 7:10
- Multicultural multitude before God's throne
- He created diversity, and wants ALL represented at His table