

REVELATION REVISITED

Assignment #3 - The Scene & Seals 1 - 4

In the Bible we are treated to the stories of two men who were privileged to stand before the throne of God. Their accounts are remarkable. As you would suspect, there are many similarities, but there are also differences. First read Ezekiel's experience in Ezekiel 1:1 – 3:4, and 3:14. Then read what John saw in Revelation 4:1 - 5:14. As you read, dwell on the visual pictures that are painted by both writers. "See" what they are seeing. Note the similarities in the descriptions of the "stage" and the "actors", as well as in the "plot" that unfolds.

1. The following document (Parallels in Ezekiel & Revelation) lists some of the many similarities in the stories. What are some of the differences between them? _____

2. What does Ezekiel say about the 24 elders, and what might this imply? _____

3. What do the actions of the "Elders" (Rev 5:8) tell us about their role in heaven? _____

4. Who might the 24 elders be? (see Matt 27:51-53 and Eph 4:8) _____

5. Does Ezekiel's story shed any light on why John may have wept at finding that no one could open the scroll? _____
6. Does the Bible make any other reference to a sealed book? Dan 12:9 _____

Using Ezekiel's story as a pattern, John might have expected that the message in God's hand would be given him to eat, and that he would be commanded to share the message with others.
But the book was sealed.
Look at Revelation 10 to see the continuation of the story after the seals have been removed!

Chapter 5 builds to a tremendous crescendo of praise in verses 11 - 14, in which the Lamb is found worthy to receive a 7-fold blessing. Then - with all heaven attesting to His right to do so - He breaks the seals..... one after the other.

7. Does anything in the story itself tell us when this scene takes place in heaven? _____
8. If not, how can we determine when the unsealing of the book begins? _____
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The events pictured when the seals are removed are perhaps best likened to our modern political cartoons. For these cartoons to work, they must refer to real events, movements or people - even if they use symbolic language. Also, they need to be fairly straightforward and easy to understand. Read Revelation 6:1-8 and see what is suggested by these “cartoons”.

9. Briefly summarize each seal. Try to find **a single word** that captures the picture.

Seal # 1 _____

Seal # 2 _____

Seal # 3 _____

Seal # 4 _____

10. Read Matthew 24:7-8 and Luke 21:10-11. Does Jesus refer to any of the elements you identified above? _____

Questions to Ponder

A.

What does this lesson teach us about Jesus and the Father?

B.

Does it comfort you to know that Jesus is the one who opens the seals?

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Parallels in Ezekiel and Revelation

Story Element	Ezekiel	Revelation
Sea of Glass	“there was something like an expanse, like the awesome gleam of crystal” (1:22)	“there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal” (4:6)
Four Cherubim	“there were figures resembling four living beings” (1:5)	“and around the throne, four living creatures”
with faces	“the face of a man... the face of a lion... the face of a bull... the face of an eagle.” (1:10)	“a lion... a calf... a man... a flying eagle.” (4:7)
and wings	“Each of them had... four wings.” (1:6)	“each one of them having six wings” (4:8)
Fire and Lightning	“In the midst of the living beings there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches darting back and forth among the living beings. The fire was bright, and lightning was flashing from the fire.” (1:13)	“Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God” (4:5)
The Throne	“there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man... and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day” (1: 26-28)	“behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne. And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.” (4:2-3)
God hands out a message	“Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it.” (2:9)	“I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book” (5:1)
Written on both sides	“When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back” (2:10)	“a book written inside and on the back” (5:1)

Open Information	“A hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back” (2:9-10)	“I saw another strong angel coming down out of heaven, clothed with a cloud; and the rainbow was upon his head, and his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire; and he had in his hand a little book which was open.” (10:1-2)
Command to eat	“He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you.’” (3:3)	“I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, ‘Take it and eat it.’” (10:9)
Sweet & Bitter	“Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.” (3:3) “and I went embittered in the rage of my spirit.” (3:14)	“I took the little book out of the angel’s hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.” (10:10)