

**Foundations of Love and Hope:
Letters of John and Revelation**
Sample Lesson



Revelation 1



This sample lesson is from the Level 3 course **Foundations of Love and Hope: Letters of John and Revelation**.

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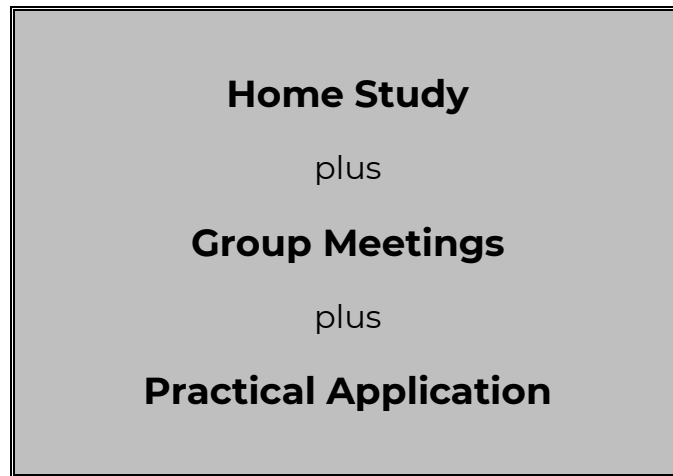
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Introduction

Our Open Learning courses are designed to help you learn by means of:



Home Study

Each course is made up of **five Blocks** and each Block has **eight lessons**. If you have about $\frac{3}{4}$ hr to spare (very roughly), you can complete one lesson. These lessons require you to read and interact with the course material as well as with your Bible.

Each lesson is **programmed** to help you check your progress as you work through. To get the maximum benefit it is important that you use the course in the way it was intended:

1. Read section 1 (often referred to by the technical term 'frame' 1).
2. Make the response required, if there is one.
3. Check that your answer corresponds with the feedback given in the 'feedback' section at the end. (Wherever feedback is given, it is marked with a raven).
4. Proceed to section 2.



Note that the **course** is programmed—**you** are **not** being programmed! The aim of programming is that:

1. you can check frequently that you have understood the material presented;
2. you are stimulated to active and critical thinking;
3. you reinforce what you learn and are better able to remember it.

Sometimes, discussion frames are given. These are clearly indicated by a heading 'For Discussion' and box. Here you should answer the question in your own words and come to the group meeting prepared to discuss the question as indicated.

At the end of each lesson, we encourage you to spend some time in reflection on how what you have learnt applies to you in the situation where God has placed you.

Group Meeting

Regular group meetings take place (normally fortnightly) where you will have the opportunity to discuss points of interest that have arisen and think through with others how your learning may be applied. At the end of each block of home study, you will also normally be given a five-minute quiz.

The group meetings give the opportunity for you to clarify ideas and to share your own thoughts and to listen to the ideas of others. The process of learning from the Bible in a group is an essential part of the programme. It is here that you are able to think through areas of application and to pray and support each other in your studies.

Practical Application

Built into our courses are questions that encourage you to apply the message of the Bible to daily life. You are also encouraged to think through how your studies relate to your own discipleship and the mission and ministry of the local church.

Block 3 Lesson 6

Revelation 4-7: Worshipping God and the Lamb



Preparing for this lesson:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a moment to pray that God will help you apply what you study today.• Remember to keep a notebook handy to note down any questions or issues for discussion.
Objectives	<p>At the end of this lesson you will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. explain the contents of Revelation 4 and 5;2. give evidence that Revelation considers Jesus to be divine;3. express your opinion about the relevance of the visions in these chapters for worship in the church today.

a. The contents of Revelation 4-7

1. We now turn to the Second Act of the drama, in which the seven seals are broken. However, before this actually happens there is a considerable amount of scene-setting: two chapters of it to be precise.

**Activity:**

Read **chapter four** and go on to the next frame.

**Note:**

As we continue through the book of Revelation, there will be many echos and allusions to other parts of Scripture which were familiar to the early church (perhaps less so to us today). Try and keep an eye out for these and jot them down in your notebook.

b. Revelation 4: All creation worships the Creator

2. Where is the action taking place in Revelation 4 (vv. 1-3)?



3. So the setting for this Act is God's throne room in heaven. It may not have occurred to you that the word 'heaven' is used in many different ways. Here it seems to refer to the sphere where God is at this moment worshipped and glorified. Remember that John is seeing a highly symbolic vision. I doubt if any human language contains words which could describe what the presence of God is really like. Which of the statements below would you say was the most accurate description of 4:1-6?

a. We are given an awe-inspiring description of God himself.

b. We are given a picture of beauty, majesty, power and glory, but the description is reticent about God.



4. In fact, how is God described (vv. 2, 9f.) and what specific reasons are given for praising him (v. 11)?



5. This description will be quite significant in the light of the revelations of the next few chapters. What does the fact that God is on the throne say to you?



6. Who surround the throne (vv. 4 and 6)? _____



7. We now have to ask ourselves what these two sets of individuals would have meant to John and to the original listeners to the letter. The number twenty-four is not obvious in the rest of the Bible. However, most commentators believe that its meaning would have been instantly recognisable to the first-century Church. Can you see any significance in it?



8. Twenty-four is obviously twice twelve and there were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve Apostles. Both of these twelves are to feature in the

description of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:12-14. So it could very well be that the elders represent these two groups, who in fact are here seen as one. Could you put into your own words who the elders represent?



9. So in Rev 4 God is praised as Creator. Now, sophisticated human beings of the twenty-first century may well puzzle over the symbolism of the four living creatures. However, to the ancient mind the lion, ox, man and eagle stood for certain impressive qualities, and represented the 'kings' of their own domain. This is reflected in a Jewish saying which dates from about 300 A.D. but which encapsulates the wisdom of many centuries (cf. Ezk 1:10):

'The mightiest among the birds is the eagle, the mightiest among domestic animals is the bull, the mightiest among the wild beasts is the lion, and the mightiest among all is man.'

In other words, the creatures represent the most noble, strong, wise and swift of all God's creation. What do these representatives of God's creation do? (4:9)



10. So representatives of which two groups praise and worship God?
-



11. **For Discussion**



If you belonged to one of the churches mentioned in Revelation 2-3, what do you think the effect of this vision of heavenly worship would have on you? Is there any significance for your church today?

c. Revelation 5: The Lamb opens the scroll

12. As we leave chapter four and move into chapter five the attention now focuses on a particular object: a scroll.



Activity:


Read **chapter five** and go on to the next frame.

13. List the two characteristics that are noted about this scroll.




14. The way that parchment was made meant that one side was a lot smoother for writing on than the other. Usually only the smooth side of the scroll was written on. However, the second side could be, and sometimes was, also written on if necessary. There was therefore no room on the scroll for any further developments to be added.


Who is worthy to open the seals on the scroll (vv. 5f., 8-10.)?




15. Why is he worthy and why is he praised here?



16. Which three groups praise and worship the Lamb (v.8, v.11)?



17. The scene has now been set for the opening of the scroll. Notice that both God 'on the throne' and 'the Lamb' are *worshipped*. Now the Greek word here (*proskuneo*, προσκυνεω) does not absolutely always mean worshipping a person as divine. For example, in Rev 3:9 it means simply, 'bow in submission, do obeisance'. But the *normal* meaning in Revelation is 'worship'. Look at Revelation 19:10 and 22:8f., where the same word is used. What would you deduce from these about Jesus' nature?



d. Review

18. In Revelation 4, God is worshipped as _____ by



representatives of _____ and _____.



19. In Revelation 5, The Lamb (Lion) is worshipped as _____ by
representatives of _____ and _____ and also by

_____.



20. For Discussion

How far do you think that the heavenly worship in these two chapters is meant to be reflected in church worship on earth? What are the implications for our churches?

Reflecting on this lesson

Note down in your notebook anything from today's lesson:



- that you want to discuss in your group meeting;
- that is significant for your own personal faith;
- that is significant for explaining Christian worship to others.

Spend some time in prayer asking God to help you apply what you have learnt.



3.6.2	in heaven
3.6.3	b.
3.6.4	sits on the throne : creator of all things (or similar words)
3.6.5	Your answer. E.g. whatever appearances may be like, God, not world powers, is the real ruler of history.
3.6.6	twenty-four elders and four living creatures
3.6.8	Your words. What about: God's people, the Old and New Testament saints, etc? Note, however, that some would relate this to the twelve angels of 21:12.
3.6.9	give glory, honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne
3.6.10	God's people and the created order (or similar words).
3.6.13	written on both sides : sealed with seven seals.
3.6.14	the Lion, the Lamb, Jesus, etc.
3.6.15	because he has triumphed over death and redeemed humanity/saints (or similar words)
3.6.16	God's people (the elders) and the created order (the four creatures) – and this time also angels.
3.6.17	Your answer. I should say it is virtually certain that he is regarded as God by nature. (You cannot worship even an angel in heaven but you can worship the Lamb.)
3.6.18	Creator; God's people; the created order.
3.6.19	Redeemer; God's people; the created order; angels.

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