

## PREPARING FOR THE SEALS

Scripture Reference: Revelation 2 - 5

Last session we looked at “Setting the Stage” and what conditions would be present in the world and in the church at the time period when the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel will begin.

<b>QUESTION?</b>	<b>What were some of these conditions?</b>

There are just a few more conditions in the church we need to examine. These are those Jesus reveals to John for him to relay to the pastors (messengers) of seven particular churches. If you remember back to session 1 on Hermeneutics, we discussed the concept of “near” and “far” prophecies.

<b>QUESTION?</b>	<b>To what did the terms “near prophecy” and “far prophecy” refer?</b>

### THE SEVEN CHURCHES

1) The Church at Ephesus: (Rev. 2:1-7)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2) The Church at Smyrna: (Rev. 2:8-11)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3) The Church at Pergamos: (Rev. 2:12-17)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4) The Church at Thyatira: (Rev. 2:18-29)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5) The Church at Sardis: (Rev. 3:1-6)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6) The Church at Philadelphia: (Rev. 3:7-13)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7) The Church at Laodicea: (Rev. 3:14-22)

a. Condition: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Warning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Promise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THE VISION BEGINS**

The Setting: Read Revelation 4 and then below, try to define who or what each element is.

- 1) The throne and the *One* who sat upon it: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2) The Twenty-four thrones and the Twenty Four Elders: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- 3) The Seven Lamps of fire... seven Spirits of God: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Sea of glass – like crystal: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5) The four living creatures:
  - a. Like a lion: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Like a calf: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Like a man: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Like a flying eagle: \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) The content of their worship for God: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

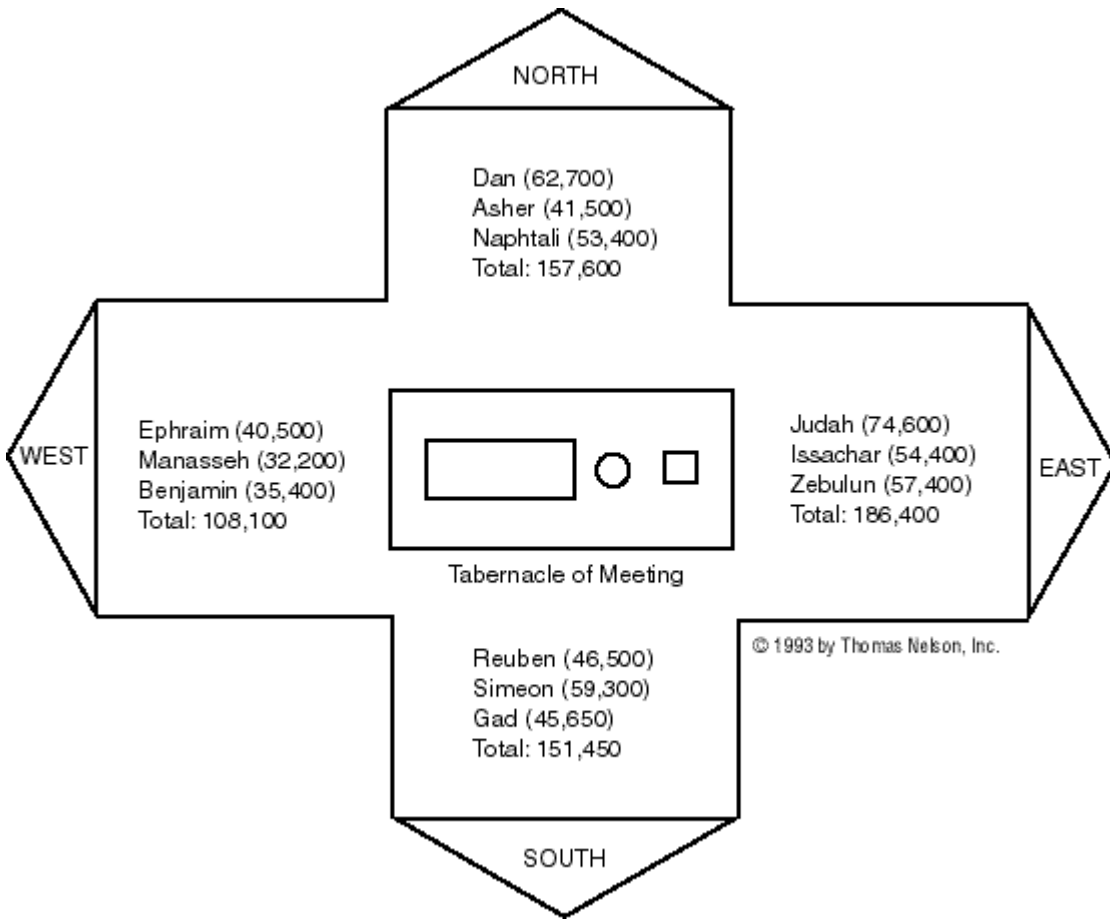
Here are my suggestions as to the identity and significance of these heavenly elements. The *One* on the throne is God, and His being on His throne screams of His sovereignty and rule over all of creation. The twenty-four elders on thrones hints their “joint yet lesser” rule with God. As to the identity of these, it is hard to fathom that the combination of the twelve tribes of Israel and then the twelve apostles (leaders of Old Covenant and New Covenant) adds up to twenty four. Of course, we don’t know for sure, but this is some strong coincidence.

The seven lamps which are the seven Spirits of God is a tough one. Perhaps the meaning is as simple as that the number “7” refers to wholeness or completeness so this is the complete Spirit of God. Some have suggested that this is a reference back to the lampstand with seven lamps (menorah) in Zechariah 4:1-10. An interesting idea is that this refers to Isaiah’s description of the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2).

The sea of glass like crystal most likely refers to the flooring in the throneroom of God. There will be no sea in the eternal heaven on the new earth (Rev. 21:1) so this supports the concept of the floor.

The four living creatures is an interesting topic. These perfectly match the revelation of Ezekiel in Ezekiel 1:10. Additionally, in Numbers 2 God lays out for Moses the formation for the encampment of the twelve tribes of Israel. This is depicted on the diagram on the next page.

### The Placement of Israel's Tribes



Read Numbers 2:1-2. Interestingly, Hebrew history tells us that the standard for these groups of tribes are as follows: The group led by Judah carried the banner of a lion. The group led by Reuben carried a banner of a man. The group led by Ephraim carried a banner of an ox. The group led by Dan carried a banner of an eagle. And, again remember, these encircle the tabernacle just as in John's vision they encircle the throne of God.

#### THE SCROLL

Read Revelation 5

- ✝ Who is holding the scroll? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✝ How many seals sealed the scroll? \_\_\_\_\_



- ✝ Some interesting points about this scroll
  - In Hebrew culture, seven seals mark the scroll as a legal document that was very binding on society such as a will.
  - Only the authorized representative of the author could open the seals and legally enact its contents.
- ✝ In verse 4, what was John's concern? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✝ What was the elder's response? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- ✝ Who is the Lamb who came and took the scroll? \_\_\_\_\_
- ✝ What is happening in the heavenly throne room as Jesus prepares to break the first seal? \_\_\_\_\_