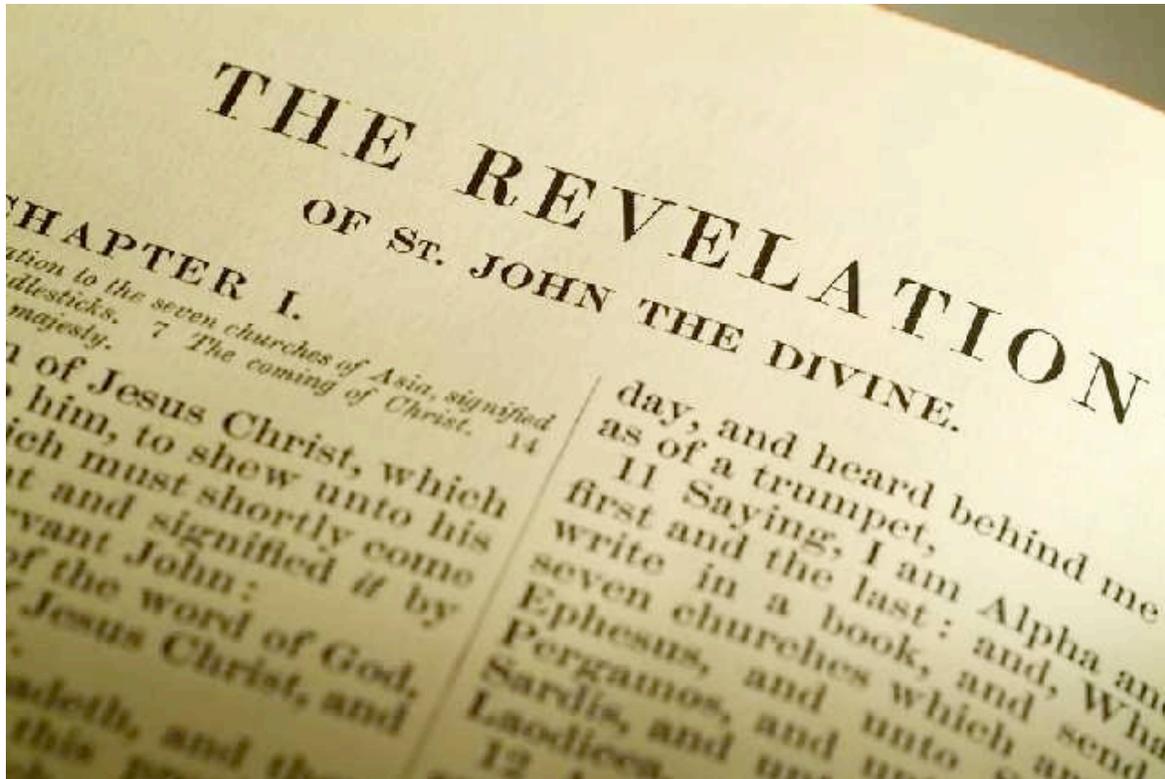


THE SECOND FACET: REVELATION 4 AND 5



A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

T. M. MOORE

The Fellowship of Ailbe

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5
Copyright 2015 T. M. Moore
The Fellowship of Ailbe
www.ailbe.org

Except as indicated, Scripture taken from the New King James Version. © Copyright 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Revelation 4 and 5

John is commanded to turn his eyes from earth – the churches in Asia Minor – to heaven, to the very throne room of the Lord. He comes up into a vision of such splendor, wonder, power, glory, and joy that words can only hint at the majesty of it all.

Here John enters into the worship of God and the Lamb, and is shown a mysterious scroll, which he longs to have opened, so that he might gain insight to its contents. He won't be disappointed.

This vision provides many important insights to the nature of worship and the workings of the divine economy, in heaven and on earth. What happens in these chapters must be kept in mind throughout our reading and study of the book of Revelation. For over all the tumult, upheaval, persecution, and strife which we will see of life on earth, the joy and victory and celebration of the eternal realm of glory will remain unchanged.

And that realm is *our* realm, where our citizenship is registered in the scroll of the Lord.

We are happy to provide *Scriptorium* studies in PDF format at no charge. We hope you will find them helpful and encouraging as you press on in your journey toward spiritual maturity with the Lord.

Please visit our website, www.ailbe.org, to discover the many other resources available to serve your needs. The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Visit our website also to subscribe to our thrice-weekly devotional newsletter, *Crosfigell*, or our daily *Voices Together* devotional and prayer guide.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

We hope you find this study of Revelation a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 “Come up here...”

Week 4, Monday: Look up!

The first facet of the diamond which is the book of Revelation is the one we see most frequently, that which is immediately before us in the churches of the Lord. We have seen that the Lord has a message for all churches in all times, and we must be willing to hear what the Spirit says to the churches and strive to be overcomers, come what may.

Now we begin to consider the second facet of Revelation. John is instructed to look up, to look beyond the veil and come through the door that separates seen from unseen things, to look with the eye of faith into mysteries never before seen, and to write what he sees as instruction and encouragement for all the Lord’s churches (Rev. 1.19).

Read Revelation 4

Meditate on Revelation 4.1-3

1. Meditate on Ephesians 1.15-23. Paul says we may see into unseen things with the “eye of the heart.” What is the eye of the heart? How does it enable us to look up into unseen things?
2. Reflect on verse 1, and compare it with Revelation 1.10. Who opens the door to unseen things? According to verse 2, what is necessary for us to “see” into this unseen realm? What does this mean?
3. Meditate on Hebrews 11.1. How would you describe the role of unseen things in the life of faith? Is it important that we look with the eye of the heart on such unseen things as John is about to see? Why or why not?
4. We must be “in the Spirit” in order to enter into unseen things. Look at John 6.63 and Ephesians 5.18-21. What seem to be important things for being “in the Spirit”?
5. The most prominent feature in heaven is a throne. Who sits on this throne? How is He described? Why do you suppose it is important that John tells us first of all about this throne in heaven?

My Reflection

How would you describe your practice of seeing with the eye of the heart to gaze into unseen things?

The Glory of God

Through Jesus, in the Spirit, and according to God’s Word, we are invited to look into the unseen things of the spiritual realm. If seeing into these unseen things is so important, why does God say so little about them? And why do most believers find it so hard to do this?

Glory to Glory

How does John depict the glory of God as He sits upon His throne? If John saw God’s glory in these terms, the terms of creation, should we expect to be able to see God’s glory in other created things? Meditate on Psalm 19.1-4 and Romans 1.18-21. How should we respond to God’s glory, as we see it manifested in creation? What does Paul say about those who fail or refuse to see God in created things?

Memorize

Our memory verse for this week is Revelation 4.11. Write this verse on an index card, using your preferred translation of the Bible. Carry this with you throughout the week, and spend some time each day working to

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

memorize this verse.

Closing Prayer

All Your works shall praise You, O Lord,

And Your saints shall bless You.

They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,

And talk of Your power,

To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,

And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.

Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,

And Your dominion *endures* throughout all generations

Psalm 145.10-13

2 Around the Throne

Week 4, Tuesday: Saints in glory

The glory and mystery of John's vision of the great throne is compounded and made more brilliant by other elements present in that scene. More colors, more thrones, more impressive sounds, elders and living creatures – a spectacular landscape of wonder, beauty, and holy fear and delight! John had never seen anything like this, but he was shown this amazing scene so that he would make it known to all who read and hear the words of the book of Revelation.

We have to wonder: What's in this vision for us?

Read Revelation 4

Meditate on Revelation 4.4-7

1. The angle from which we view this scene is important. Remember John is coming up to heaven (v. 1). Resist the temptation to look down on this image, as from a bird's eye view. Let yourself emerge into this vision, and let it unfold and expand before you. What John sees is above him, spread out before him, and reaching to the farthest horizons of what he can take in with his eyes. Imagine yourself emerging into that landscape. How would you feel?
2. A rainbow surrounds the central throne (v. 3). This image reaches all the way back to Genesis 9. Review God's purpose in giving the rainbow there (Gen. 9.8-17). The rainbow should call to our minds particular attributes of God. What might these be?
3. The 24 elders on thrones represent all true believers from both the Old and New Testaments – the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles. We'll see this symbolism again. But these 24 elders and thrones are themselves symbols of a larger reality. Meditate on Hebrews 12.1. What is that larger reality? Who is reigning (note the crowns) with God at this time? What does that "reigning" involve (we'll see more in a bit)?
4. Notice what proceeds from the great throne: thunder, lightning, and voices. These are symbols meant to suggest God's sovereignty over creation and His continuously upholding Word of power (cf. Heb. 1.3). The rule of God from His throne reaches to all creation, and the saints in glory somehow share in that rule. Do we? How does Psalm 8 lead us to think about this?
5. The Holy Spirit illuminates the throne room of God (for the reference to "seven" Spirits, or the "seven-fold" Spirit of God, see the aspects of the Spirit as described in Revelation 1.4 and Isaiah 11.2. Other creatures are present – in the midst of the throne and around it, suggesting constant movement. With the elders, they are symbols, here, of creation redeemed. The "sea" of glass may be reminiscent of the bronze "sea" – or large washing basin – that Solomon constructed before the altar of sacrifice in the temple. Taking all these images together, including the colors, sounds, creatures, and their placements, what "message" does the Lord want us to take away from this glimpse into the unseen realm?

My Reflection

Suppose this glorious vista were suddenly to open before you, right now. How would you feel? Now, know that this unseen realm *is* present and before you, not just now, but at all times. How should this lead you to think about your daily life in the Lord?

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

The Glory of God

Color, sound, objects, movement, placement, size – all these forms, themes, and images are intended for one purpose: to represent and augment the glory of God. Why is this so important? What is the effect of all this on your understanding and experience of the glory of God?

Glory to Glory

In a very real sense, we “travel” in the midst of this glorious scene, our lives unfolding daily under the watchful eye of God, saints, and all creation, every day of our lives. In the light of Hebrews 11.1, do you think it’s important to keep this in mind? What would Paul say (Col. 3.1-3)?

Memorize

Let’s look more closely at our memory verse, Revelation 4.11. Recite your memory verse aloud. In your own words, define the following words (from the NKJV): worthy, glory, honor, power.

Closing Prayer

The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The Lord is clothed,
He has girded Himself with strength.
Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be moved.
Your throne *is* established from of old;
You *are* from everlasting.

Psalm 93.1, 2

3 On Earth as in Heaven

Week 4, Wednesday: The worship of God in heaven

Now the whole inhabited unseen realm breaks out in glorious praise and thanks to God. As the Kingdom of God comes on earth as it is in heaven, should we expect anything other than this as the hallmark of our common experience? And what can we learn from what we see here about the nature and role of worship?

Read Revelation 4

Meditate on Revelation 4.8-11

1. What should we make of the six wings and being “full of eyes”? Can you see the intimation of motion and omnipresence? What are these creatures continually doing?
2. Meditate on the following: Psalm 19.1-4 and Psalm 145.10-13. Do these shed any light on the meaning of what we read in v. 8?
3. Let’s look more closely at the worship that’s suggested in verse 10. Here is a “trinity of trinities” of worship. What does the example of the living creatures suggest about the content of our worship, the form of our worship, the focus of our worship, and the constancy of our worship? What kind of practical implications does this suggest for you?
4. The pattern continues in verse 9 and 10. How does the “worship” of “creation” affect all the other inhabitants of this unseen realm (note also, in verse 9, yet another “trinity” of worship)? Again, if this is the way the Kingdom – the rule of God – “works” in heaven, what should we be seeking, and what should we expect as we pray for this Kingdom to come on earth like this? What does the elders casting “their crowns before the throne” suggest about elements of worship?
5. What can we learn from verse 11 about the purpose of worship? Why do we worship the Lord? What we saw – and heard – in verse 5a is here explicitly declared (“For You created all things,/And by Your will they exist and were created.”). How can we keep this motive in view as we join together in the worship of God?

My Reflection

How would you describe your worship of God? Is it like what you see here? Does it follow the purpose expressed here? Use the forms? Follow the “formulas”? Are you worshiping God on earth as the inhabitants of heaven worship Him there?

The Glory of God

Suppose you had been a “visitor” in the service of worship described here. Meditate on 1 Corinthians 14.24, 25. Using the words of verses 8 and 11, describe your experience of worshiping God with these beings. Is this what you experience in worship at your church? Why or why not?

Glory to Glory

Should what you experience in worship affect the way you live? Why does Paul describe our daily lives in the Lord as a kind of “worship” (Rom. 12.1, 2)?

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Memorize

Recite your memory verse aloud: Revelation 4.11. Share this verse with a Christian friend. Using this verse, and verse 8, explain to your friend what you're learning about the worship of God in heaven.

Closing Prayer

Meditate on Psalm 50. Using parts of this psalm, write a prayer expressing your hopes and aspirations for the worship you should bring to the Lord:

4 Longing for the Scroll

Week 4, Thursday: The Word in worship

In the midst of this holy, mysterious, glorious service of worship, John's attention is drawn to the "scroll" which is fully covered with writing, held in the right hand of God. This is the Word of God – not just the Bible, as we have it, but all the counsel and decrees of God, especially and ultimately as these are embodied in Him Who sits at the Father's right hand.

Read Revelation 5

Meditate on Revelation 5.1-4

1. God holds a scroll which is covered with writing on both sides. It is "sealed with seven seals." This seems like a pretty important document, whatever it is. Why?
2. A "strong angel" appears, addressing himself to the scroll. Why do we need to know that this is a "strong" angel? What importance do you attach to this "strong angel" wanting to have the scroll opened? Can you relate this angel – this "messenger" – and his character and burden to the "angels" – "messengers" – of the seven churches of chapters 2 and 3? Does the Lord intend an indirect message to the pastors of those 7 churches?
3. Meditate on verse 3. Why would God have a scroll, full of writing, that no one in heaven or earth could read or interpret? How should this affect the way we think about this scroll and its contents?
4. Notice John's response to the dilemma of verse 3. Why does he weep? What kind of longing does this express? Do we weep when we cannot get at or understand the words God holds in His hand?
5. From these verses, what can you surmise about the role of God's Word in worship? Think about this for a bit, then answer this question as thoroughly as you can.

My Reflection

The scroll contains words God holds in His right hand. At the very least, the Word of God in Scripture is indicated here. How would you describe your attitude toward the Word of God at this time? How does that attitude manifest in your daily experience?

The Glory of God

God holds these words in His hand – His Word. The glory that adheres to Him Who sits on the throne is therefore shared in the words He holds in His hand. How should this affect our view of Scripture? Of all the other revelation of God (recall question 2 from yesterday)?

Glory to Glory

God "lends" His glory to His Word. His Word reveals His glory to us. How should the Word of God impact our lives? Meditate on 2 Corinthians 3.12-18 and 1 Corinthians 10.31 in thinking through your answer.

Memorize

Recite Revelation 4.11. As you recite it, face and gesture in the direction of whatever is mentioned. Let your body get involved with this text as you internalize it in your soul.

Closing Prayer

My soul clings to the dust;

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Revive me according to Your word.
I have declared my ways, and You answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.
My soul melts from heaviness;
Strengthen me according to Your word.

Psalm 119.25-28

5 Lion, Root, Lamb

Week 4, Friday:

These verses – chapters 4 and 5 – are so rich with instruction that we have to go slowly through them. Every detail matters and is intended to instruct us in the ways of the divine economy. What we see going on in heaven should guide how we think about our lives here on earth, how we worship God, even to how we get at the meaning of God’s written Word.

Then, suddenly, the Centerpiece of worship steps forward.

Read Revelation 5

Meditate on Revelation 5.5-7

1. Let’s proceed slowly. In these verses, something is *about* to happen. What is about to happen, and, given what we’ve seen thus far, what significance or how much importance should we place on this?
2. Meditate on Ephesians 2.19-22. Match the “characters” in these verses with those mentioned thus far in Revelation 4 and 5. Who are the “apostles and prophets”? Who are the “you”? Who constitutes what Paul describes as the “building” that is holy unto the Lord?
3. John is longing to hear and understand the words of the scroll – longing so much that he weeps. Should believers weep and long to hear the Word of God, rightly proclaimed? How does the “elder” minister to John? What does he promise the apostle?
4. John is told to look for one thing. But then he sees another. This is not the last time we’ll see this happen. Who is this “Lion”, “Root”, and “Lamb”? Why is each of these terms appropriate, and how does each lead us to think about or regard the One Who is able to open the scroll?
5. The Lamb steps forward, full of the Holy Spirit, from the midst of the heavenly throne and the earthly elders and living creatures. He takes the scroll out of the hand of God. Does this suggest anything unique or important about this Lamb? Do you begin to get the idea that the Lamb is somehow central – in every respect – to the service of worship we’ve been observing in chapters 4 and 5? In what ways?

My Reflection

Jesus is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. How does that affect you? He is the Root of David. You abide in Him. How does His rootedness in David affect you? He is the Lamb, filled with the Spirit. How does that affect you?

The Glory of God

In these verses, everything becomes focused on the Lamb, Who has been in the center of things – the throne, the elders, the living creatures – but just not recognized until He makes His presence known. What does this suggest about meeting the Lord in worship? Waiting on Him? Seeking Him?

Glory to Glory

How do you expect the Lamb of God to “step out of the shadows” as it were in your life today?

Memorize

Review Revelation 4.11. Pray this verse aloud, inserting the Name of Jesus wherever you can.

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Closing Prayer

Write out your memory verse as a prayer. Put the Names of Jesus – Lion, Root, Lamb – wherever you think they fit best in this prayer. Pray this prayer throughout the day.

6 The Lamb

Week 4, Saturday:

With the stepping forward of the Lamb, and His receiving the scroll from the hand of God, the tone and intensity of worship are dramatically ratcheted up. All the creatures in the throne room fall down; the sound of harps and the sweet smell of incense fill the scene; the saints on earth are somehow included; and glorious hymns summing up the redemptive work of the Lamb fill the chambers of heaven.

This is worship as it should be.

Read Revelation 5

Meditate on Revelation 5.8-10

1. The sense of anticipation in this scene is palpable. As the Lamb receives the scroll, evidently in preparation for opening it, all the worshipers go down, while all their worship intensifies. Why do you suppose this should be so?
2. The glory of this scene is enhanced now by new sounds and the intimation of sweet smells. That incense, we are told, is the “prayers of the saints.” Meditate on this image: The elders in heaven holding prayers which have come up from the saints – presumably, on earth – which are, in their possession, made like sweet incense. What do you make of this, and of what it suggests about the role in heaven of those who have preceded us there, and of how we should view our own “participation” in this realm of unseen things?
3. A “new song” erupts, honoring the Lamb, His achievement, and the effects of what He has done. The Lamb is “worthy” to open the scroll of God. Why? Should we, in our own worship, be looking to the Lamb to open the Lord’s Word to us? Explain.
4. Summarize the *extent* of the Lamb’s achievement and the *effects* of it “on the earth”? What is the sense of “we shall reign” in this song?
5. Do you suppose the opening of the scroll has anything to do with the promise, “we shall reign”? How should this instruct us as we seek the Lamb to open God’s Word to us?

My Reflection

In your times of worship – whether private or corporate – do you have a sense of participating in this unseen realm? How would you describe your experience of worship – what you see, how you feel, what worship does in or for you?

The Glory of God

How strange to think that the appearance of a Lamb could evoke such ratcheting-up of the worship of saints and angels and all creation! A Lion, surely; a King descending from David, of course. But a Lamb? What is the power or glory or spiritual influence that we should associate with the Lamb, that He should affect us so profoundly as we worship?

Glory to Glory

Is it reasonable to expect that this “sense” of the Lamb and His worthiness, His achievement and everything that portends from His opening the Word to us – is it reasonable to expect that this should accompany us through the course of a typical day? Why or why not? Would it make any difference in our day if it did?

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Memorize

Recite Revelation 4:11. Pray through this verse in the light of everything we've seen so far in Revelation 4 and 5. Make the words your words. Tell the Lord how you plan to honor and glorify Him, and to employ His power today. Plan to share your memory verse with someone today.

Closing Prayer

The LORD reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad!
Clouds and darkness surround Him;
Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the LORD of the whole earth.
The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.
Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
Worship Him, all *you* gods.
Zion hears and is glad,
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
For You, LORD, *are* most high above all the earth;
You are exalted far above all gods.

Psalm 97:1-9

7 **Worshippers All!**

Week 4, Sunday: Worship in the highest!

We thought the worship of the Lamb couldn't get any higher, broader, or more all-engrossing. We were wrong. As this scene and facet draw to a close, worship spreads like a happy virus to infect everything in heaven and on earth, as though worshipping the Lamb were irresistible, the very reason and fulfillment of everything that exists.

If this is the conclusion we draw from this closing scene, then we're right.

Read Revelation 5

Meditate on Revelation 5.11-14

1. Notice, in v. 11, the mention of multitudes of all the creatures that seemed, well, rather limited in number heretofore. What is the effect of this on the worship in this situation?
2. This great multitude takes up yet another stanza in the song, "Worthy is the Lamb!" (v. 12). Explain each of the terms the Lamb is worthy to receive. How does His receiving these affect your worship of Him? How does His living in you affect your outlook on life?
3. In verse 13 the worship of heaven breaks through the veil, spills out and down, over and through, and catches up everything on earth. Comment on this, in the light of Matthew 6.9, 10, as to what we should be seeking in these last days before our Lord returns.
4. The elders – all the saints – in heaven now respond (v. 14) to the impact of heaven's worship on every creature on earth. What does "Amen" mean? What are they affirming by announcing "Amen" together?
5. What adjectives or phrases would you use to capture the scene and worship we have observed in Revelation 4 and 5? And still, to this point in this "service of worship", the Word of God has not been opened! Do you see in this picture any implications or suggestions for your own worship? For the worship of your church? For your time preparing to open the Word of God each day?

My Reflection

How do Revelation 4 and 5 lead you to think about your own worship of God? How complete is your worship? How much do you put into it? What do you gain from it? When do you worship? Using what components or elements?

The Glory of God

The glory of God cannot be contained to the courts of heaven. That much is clear from Revelation 4 and 5. All creation is to be caught up in the glory of God and the achievement of the Lamb, and even then, His glory will flow back up to heaven to His glorious throne. Meditate on Habakkuk 2.14. What does "cover the earth" mean in your own personal sphere of influence?

Glory to Glory

This week talk with some other believers about what you're learning from Revelation 4 and 5 concerning worship. Ask them about their approach to and experience of worship. How can you help one another bring

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

your worship more into line with the worship you see revealed in these two chapters? What can you begin to do each day in order to prepare more worshipfully for the opening of the Word of God?

Memorize

Today, share your memory verse for this week (Revelation 4.11) with a Christian friend, and briefly explain what you have learned about this verse.

Closing Prayer

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.

Psalm 98.1-4

Revelation: The Second Facet
Revelation 4 and 5

Week 3: Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Review Jesus' message to each of the seven churches of Asia Minor. In your own words, summarize what Jesus wanted those pastors to tell His congregations:
2. How can you see that these messages are not just for the churches of John's day, but for all churches – and all believers – in all times and places?
3. Jesus repeats the phrase "him who overcomes." What do we need to overcome? How may we overcome it?
4. What are the most important lessons for you personally from Revelation 2 and 3? Summarize those lessons:
5. How are you beginning to implement those lessons in your walk with and work for the Lord?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

The Fellowship of Ailbe is a spiritual fellowship in the Celtic Christian tradition. Our goal is to promote revival, renewal, and awakening, following the teaching of Scripture and the example and heritage of our forebears in the faith.

The Fellowship of Ailbe offers many opportunities for training, prayer, personal growth, and ministry. Visit our website at www.ailbe.org to learn more.

We hope you found this study helpful. If so, please consider making a gift to The Fellowship. You can contribute to our ministry by using the donate button at the website, or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 19 Tyler Dr., Essex Junction, VT 05452.

Thank you.