



## All Creation Joins in Giving Praise to God and the Lamb

### *A study of Revelation with focus on Earthcare*

Central text for this six-week study is Revelation 5:11-14:

Leader: Begin by handing out a copy of these verses and reading them aloud in unison.

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice,*

*“Worthy is the Lamb that was  
slaughtered  
to receive power and wealth and  
wisdom and might  
and honor and glory and  
blessing!”*

*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,*

*“To the one seated on the throne  
and the Lamb  
be blessing and honor and glory  
and might  
forever and ever!”*

*And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the elders fell down and worshiped.*



**Leader:** All sorts of images come to mind when we say the word “earth care.” What are your first thoughts in response to “earth care? *Expect that people will think of recycling, of environmental concerns.* Show overheads (the image of the earth with the recycling sign around it, smiling earth, people planting) and see if there are more ideas. Keep a record of the thoughts people come up with (up front-on a white board or a piece of paper.)



**Leader:** All sorts of images come to mind when we say “apocalypse.” Again, just off the top of your head, what images come to mind? *Expect thoughts as, end of the world, fire, mushroom cloud.* Show overheads (images of the nuclear testing, fire, sick earth) and see if there are more ideas. Keep a record of the thoughts people come up with.

**Leader:** During this six-week study we will be seeking to understand how the apocalyptic word that we read about in the book of Revelation is the conquering word for the care of the earth.

**Leader:** It sounds a little crazy, the word that we hear synonymous with destruction is the word of hope for our earth.

Leader: Take a few minutes at this time for introductions and find a scribe in the group, who can write down ideas from the next discussion.

**Leader:** As we think about our earth, what are some of the environmental concerns that we are faced with today? *Take example from the group, but be prepared to bring up ideas as excessive use of resources and forcing production through use of chemicals.*

**Leader:** After this list is up on the white board, ask the group to think about what feeds these problems. In other words, what is the problem behind the problem? How did we get into this mess and why are these problems getting worse and not better? *Here we expect that we will hear about excessive consumerism, wealth, luxury, waste, and thinking we are immune.*

**Leader:** As we work our way through the book of Revelation, we will be looking to see how this book offers hope to our earth by addressing this list. We will keep this list in front of us and refer to it as we go along.

1. Ask someone in the group to read Revelation 1:1-3.

**Leader:** The second word we read is, the Greek word, **ἀποκάλυψις**, revelation. This is a word that does things to our mind. Think of the images we came up with earlier in this session. Often we think of Revelation as a sort of unintelligible code that no one understands, while at the same time a harbinger of a scary future. Once we read the word prophesy in verse three, that meaning is gelled in our minds. But, what is interesting is that the way a person reads Revelation, that is, the angle that is taken, has a lot to do with how we end up understanding it.

How many have read at least one book of the Left Behind series? This is a very intriguing series of books that have become very popular (50 million copies popular). This series follows the idea that Revelation is a book that explains our future. The way that Tim LaHay presents the sequence of events is through a reading of the Bible that is a theological system that was originally presented in 1859 by John Nelson Darby. It is called the dispensationalist view. Hand out copies of the dispensationalist view. Darby worked to make things all fit together. In order to do that, he reads Daniel chapter 9 in such a way as to fit the rapture in to the picture. Neither Daniel nor Revelation involves the rapture. He says that the rapture happens between Daniel 9:25 and Daniel 9:27. There are difficulties when the theory is dependent on where the punctuation is placed. It is interesting how literal and symbolic are understood. Is it literal to skip 2000 years in Daniel? As we work through Revelation, we will check back with Left Behind.

Over time people have viewed Revelation as a book that tells the future, but also as a book having significance for the people it was written for and for us today. Victorinus of Pettau (300) wrote a commentary where he noticed that the book isn't linear. Instead it seems to be the same reality presented in multiple forms. Show Professor Koester's presentation (on the white board \_\_\_\_\_). Augustine, working with ideas from Tyconius, came up with an interpretation that could be applied to the interior life of all Christians at all times. This view is timeless and spiritual.

Over time there have been various ways and attempts to read this book. It is a book that has serious content. It is a book that moves people to hope in the future. As we read it together in the next six weeks, we will read it as it is and see what it says to us.

We will look to see how it addresses this list (pointing to the list the group came up with associated with issues behind our behavior in care for our earth.) We will read this word as a word that is a conquering word for the care of the earth.

