

Lessons Given By:  
Archimandrite Athanasios Mitilinaios

Homilies on the Book of the Revelation  
Published in 2009 by  
[www.saintnicodemos.org](http://www.saintnicodemos.org)  
Translated and Adapted by Constantine Zalalas

Revelation The Seven Gold Lampstands  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition coming soon  
[www.zoepress.us](http://www.zoepress.us)

Lesson 1  
October 12, 1980

By the grace of our Triune God, we have arrived once again to the month of October, the month when most of us prepare for winter and our farmers prepare the fields to plant. As our farmers go out to their fields to plant their wheat, in the same manner it is necessary for the word of God to come forth and be planted. *A sower went out to sow his seed* (Luke 8:5-15). The word of God comes forth not to till or cultivate, but to sow. The preparation of the field is the responsibility of man.

Now, if we come to hear the word of God, how we hear it, perceive it, and how it affects our personal life, is something totally dependent on us. However, the Sower comes and sows constantly. This is the exodus of God, which is an exodus of God's love towards His creation. God wanted to walk with His people. He did so through His incarnation, and He continues to come to sow the word of His divine truth.

At times the word of God falls on trampled and hard ground, unbroken and untilled. For this reason it leaves the ground of the heart indifferent. One comes and hears the word of God, but is not moved at all. The word of God also falls on fickle hearts, those that become easily enthused. They feel inner joy for the word of God, but when they step out the door, they forget everything. Other seeds fall on hearts that promise a lot, who map out a beautiful spiritual life, but one thousand and one concerns of this life come and choke the seedlings of God and in the end these hearts remain fruitless. We pray that no one belongs to the above categories. No, my beloved, the word of God must fall on good and fertile soil so that it can bear fruit, the fruit of holiness. However, these hearts must accept the word of God with fear and humility, and in doing so they will produce thirty-fold, sixty-fold and one hundred-fold (cf. Matthew 13: 8-23; Mark 4:8-20).

This year, the grace of God offers us the great opportunity to sow His word from Revelation. It is the last book of the New Testament; it forms the conclusion of all Scripture and closely corresponds with Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Genesis and Revelation form an axis of the fall and salvation of man. If Genesis refers to the history of man's fall, Revelation refers to the history of man's

restoration and salvation. In Genesis, we have the description of the creation of the world and of man. It is the beautiful twilight of the visible created world. Unfortunately, the man and the woman, at the instigation of the devil, fell into sin, and in addition to sin, both death and corruption were introduced to the world. To all appearances, God's beautiful plan to have nature draw near to unite with Him, to be deified and sanctified, was negated. Yet, that which God creates cannot be nullified or negated. In order to renew the visible created world, God's economy brought forth the incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity – Jesus Christ.

The world did not accept Jesus Christ and it crucified Him. Still, the plan of salvation was not negated. By His death on the cross, Christ crushed the devil; and by His resurrection, death and corruption were defeated. So, the Church, the Body of Christ, continues to travel through history facing much tribulation, turmoil and martyrdom from the God-opposing, God-fighting powers that continuously crucify the flesh of Christ. In the end, the Church will be victorious, triumphant, because Christ defeated the devil, the world and death. The Church *sanctifies* nature and leads it to the Kingdom of God.

If Genesis gives us an account of the creation of man and his fall, Revelation describes apocalyptically the journey of the Church, of the faithful through the history of creation and more specifically, the rebirth, re-creation, and the eternal glory of man and the visible creation. Revelation, which we are introducing today, contains the entire mystery of the divine plan, of divine economy, from the incarnation of the Word of God until the Second Coming of Christ, Judgment Day and the appearance of the Kingdom of God.

To give you a bird's eye view: in one scene alone in Revelation, the mystery of incarnation is made manifest. In chapter twelve we read about the woman who holds a male child. Before she gave birth, the beast was waiting for the pregnant woman to give birth so he could grab the newly born child and devour it. When the child was born, the woman was led into the desert, and the beast, forming a river by spewing water out of his mouth, ran behind her to sweep her away with the flood. However, he does not reach the child because the child ascends into heaven. My friends, this is the entire history of the incarnation.

According to one of our Church fathers, the devil was searching out the virgins even during Old Testament times to see which one would give birth to the Messiah. However, according to Saint Ignatius of Antioch, the male child escaped the attention of the prince of this world (cf. John 12:31, 14:30). The devil was not informed about the Son of God's birth from the Virgin.<sup>1</sup> However, he always kept a close watch. We see this very clearly in Revelation. *And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, that he might devour her child when she brought it forth* (Revelation 12:4).

The woman swept away in the torrent signifies the Theotokos, or the Church. The person of the woman here has two aspects or two applications: the Theotokos, and the Church. One application is certainly the Church because the Church is the

---

<sup>1</sup> Saint Ignatius of Antioch, *Ephesians*, 19, 1.

Body of Christ, the body Christ received from the Theotokos,<sup>2</sup> the Panagia.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, the Theotokos and the Church is the same thing, with two different views or aspects. The Church is persecuted; the disciples and the Theotokos are persecuted, but the child is snatched up to heaven. In other words, we have the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ. The devil can no longer do anything to the child. Since the devil cannot go to heaven, he pursues the woman in the desert. He turns against the Church, day in and day out, and we can see in this scene alone the cross section of the mystery of God's holy economy. Scenes like this permeate Revelation.

Revelation refers to the establishment and expansion of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Church of Christ. It refers to the unfolding of the battle between the Church (or the woman) and the beast, or the God-opposing powers. We will soon see what these God-opposing powers are. In the end, the plagues take place against the beast and against the unbelieving world. The Church is triumphant. Christ comes and judges the world, the devil is bound, and the Kingdom of God arrives in glowing splendor. This reveals the general diagram of the Revelation and its central theme, the Second Coming of Christ as Judge and King, which begins and ends this book. The Church, or the Bride, and the Spirit (who remains in the Church) will say, *Come Lord Jesus!* And the response is, *'Yes, I am coming soon!'* (Revelation 22:20). These words describe the state of expectation, characteristic of both the book and the Church.

The Church is expecting Christ; She awaits Him as Judge and as King to put away all evil and to expel the devil so sin, corruption, decay and death will cease to exist. We will also notice, as we progress, the repeated usage of a seven-fold system. This will be more obvious during the analysis of the book. Again, the central subject matter is the battle between the Kingdom of God and the God-opposing power, with the resulting triumph of the Church of Christ. The purpose of Revelation is both for the preparation of the faithful to face the tribulation that awaits them, and for the consolation and strengthening of the faithful that they might *fight the good fight* until the end (1 Timothy 6:12). All the things that I am referring to in a few words are recorded in Revelation with visions, images, and descriptions that make up its symbolic language.

To be sure, Revelation is primarily a prophetic book. However, prophecy does not only reveal future events, it also reveals the present. Thus, we have here prophecy in its broad sense. Our Lord Himself instructs John, *Now write what you see, what is and what is to take place hereafter* (1:19). According to our Orthodox Christian Tradition, Saint John was exiled to the island of Patmos, where the cave of the Revelation is located. The cave is still there today. Saint John used to pray there without ceasing. According to Tradition, on a certain Sunday (as he will tell us in the beginning of the vision) *he was in the spirit* (1:10) and saw these revelations and visions which he recorded following the command of Christ, *Now write what you see,*

---

<sup>2</sup> The most theological title of the Virgin: "the birth-giver of God".

<sup>3</sup> Pan-agia, (all holy, pan-holy) is the most commonly used title of the Virgin Mary among Greek Orthodox Christians.

*what is and what is to take place hereafter* (1:19). From this we see that Revelation is prophetic.

We mentioned that prophecy in its broad sense is not limited to the future, but may contain or include the future, the present, and even the past. We will explain. When a prophecy pertains to the future, it reveals something that will take place in the future and which is unknown to every created being. The future is not known to any created being. Prophecy is a privilege of the true God and it is a privilege of our true Orthodox Faith.

A prophecy can also pertain to the present and to whatever thing or event escapes the attention of the people at that time. For example, when Saint John the Baptist is called a prophet, he was not prophesying the future but the present; the nucleus of his prophecy was, "Here is the Messiah. Here is the Lamb of God." (cf. John 1:29). The leaders of the people asked him, "Who are you? Are you the Messiah?" No, I am not the Messiah. *I am the voice of the one calling and crying out in the wilderness.* (Isaiah 40:3). I am here to witness for the Messiah. The One who has been before me in time, is here now. The One who is more powerful than I, *the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie!* (John 1:27). John is prophesying about Christ, but Christ is already present. We must add that it is more difficult to prophesy the present than to prophesy the future.

Finally, a prophecy also pertains to the past as it prophesies events that the human eye has not seen. The creation of nature and man was unseen. All this was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai whose prophetic eye captured the past. To add another dimension to the meaning of prophecy, which we set forth above, prophecy has the element of teaching. It serves to advice, to move people towards straight paths and repentance, to bring consolation and encouragement to those who are fighting the good fight of the spiritual life, and so on. So prophecy does not limit itself to what happened and what will happen, but it also serves to teach God's people how to conduct themselves.

That said, we must not look at Revelation in the narrow sense of prophecy, as a book that will reveal the future to us. Revelation will take us back into the past and refer to the present as well. Our Lord said, *what is now* (1:19), those things that exist *now*, not necessarily the symbolic images that John was seeing in the vision. No, when Saint John writes about Babylon the great prostitute (the great harlot), meaning Rome, Rome is not limited to that period of two thousand years ago. *What is now* is also valid for today, so we must not limit our interpretation only to historical facts. Thus, *what is now* is for today *and* for tomorrow.

We need to understand that Revelation transcends the past, present, and future. It serves to comfort, uplift, restore, censure, call out, and to point out the Antichrist. This is for all times, for all seasons but especially at times when spiritual awareness is at low ebb. Revelation is a very graphic book with much inexpressible grace, freshness and tenderness despite some of the horrific images.

It is a true masterpiece of the Holy Spirit and it becomes truly delightful for the person who can comprehend and see some of its wonders.

It is written in the common dialect of the Hellenistic times. The scope of its literature is so interesting that foreign scholars claim that Revelation employs its own grammar, and this makes it very graceful. It is not extremely rich in its vocabulary. In this, it is similar to Saint John's Gospel, which although it has the poorest vocabulary of the four Gospels, flies in the stratosphere of theology. It is the most theological of all the Gospels. Saint John mimics the *kenosis* or emptying of God the Word, Who takes on the poverty of human existence.

The very Word of God became poor, and through these lowly and poor words that Saint John uses, the wealth of theology is made manifest, the wealth of the Kingdom of God. This wealth is so abundant that it runs over and beyond the meaning of the words themselves. It is something so fantastic, so amazing, that only the person who familiarizes himself with Revelation can discover all these elements and wonders in a way that they never exhaust themselves. It is a true masterpiece. It has unity, symmetry, great rhythm; it has powerful wording despite the poverty of the words. It has wealth – wealth of color and tone. It has a great variety of topics, a certain flexibility, and vivacity. Its charm magnetizes the person who reads and studies it. There is no other book in the history of humanity that has as many commentaries, writings, and references as Revelation. A great number of books have been written, are being written, and will be written about Revelation. It is a great treasure, a book of great depth that awakens the conscience of people.

It amazes people with its wonderful imagery and scenery. The main setting is heaven and earth. Its place of reference is the entire universe. Its time frame is not limited to the earth's history, but moves beyond that to universal history and eternity. This is why we would be making an interpretive mistake if we wished to interpret Revelation based on a particular topography, a specific geography such as the United States, Greece, or Constantinople. Few overcome the temptation that coerces them to interpret events of this book in the narrow space of their city or country. Revelation is not a book for the Greeks, the Russians or the Americans. It is a universal book. Its stage is heaven and earth. Its period is the history of the universe and eternity.

So, let's not try to limit it to our national dreams and aspirations. This is a very pitiable approach which is why all those who try to interpret in this narrow-minded manner have missed the mark. My friends, the claims of all those who wrote books and commentaries within these narrow boundaries were false, and they were obviously ashamed. In the Greek history of interpreters, for example, Apostolos Makrakis<sup>4</sup> interpreted Revelation in the limited geographical area of the country of Greece with Constantinople as the axis. It goes without saying that when we try to interpret according to the current events of each century we will not be accurate.

At the beginning of the century, Makrakis tried to interpret Revelation using Islam as the dark power or the spirit of the Antichrist. There is no question that the expansion of Islam is included in the entire spectrum of this book. Yet, we cannot say that Revelation will deal exclusively with this current trend. This is a mistake.

---

<sup>4</sup> Apostolos Makrakis (1851-1905): Greek lay theologian, preacher, philosopher, ethicist, and writer. The Church of Greece condemned some of his teachings.

Communism, atheism, or materialism cannot take center stage in this book. They are simply links in the chain. They are great factors, and they are included in this book because these systems take on universal dimensions. However, Revelation does not confine itself to these systems alone. So let's never say that the beast is communism or Islam. These are forerunners of the beast, but they are not the actual apocalyptic beast.

The introduction of the book aims to attract interest. However, let's be careful. Do not expect to hear, while interpreting this book, if and when World War III will take place, or when the Antichrist will come, and when the Second Coming of Christ will take place. Please do not expect these things. We need to follow the proven path of our Church. This path, my friends, was mapped out by God-inspired holy Fathers who wrote theologically sound commentaries on Revelation: Saint Andrew of Caesarea, of the sixth century and Saint Arethas, Archbishop of Caesarea of the ninth century. I have both commentaries in my hands, glory be to God. I have two complete commentaries on Revelation, in which one can see the Orthodox teaching of how our Church interprets Revelation. It is not mere coincidence (and we will analyze this more as we continue), that our Church fathers did not overly occupy themselves with the Revelation. We will see this in our journey. Panayiotis Trembelas, for example, interpreted and published commentaries on all of the books of holy Scripture with the exception of Revelation. Trembelas was a great Greek scholar of the twentieth century. My basic resources include the great commentary of Professor Bratsiotis<sup>5</sup> (the only one of its kind in neo-Hellenic theological literature) along with Saints Andrew and Arethas. These serve as my guides. All the others have some hidden dangers.

Therefore, I urge you not to let your imagination go wild over what is going to happen and what new things we are about to learn. No. Vigilance is required. We will learn in our long journey through this holy book how we are to understand this Scripture. I will certainly try to tell you a few things on this point but I will not discuss it exhaustively, instead we will continue discussing it as we journey through the analysis of this book. In spite of all the things that we just mentioned, we cannot say that we do not need to look out for the signs of the times (cf. Matthew 16:3). On the contrary, we need to watch for the signs because our Lord Himself instructed us about this. He spoke to us about the signs of the end of times. He said, *As soon as the twigs of the fig tree get tender and its leaves come out you know that summer is near* (Matthew 24:32). He goes on to give a number of signs in the Gospel. He tells us *then you will know that the end is near*. Which end, Lord?

Here, there is a double image, the end of Jerusalem and the end of the world. Revelation is a very difficult book. The prophecy is unfathomable. As he was on his way to Rome to be martyred and become food for the lions, Saint Ignatius instructs Saint Polycarp in a letter: "Study the times diligently. Anticipate the One Who is above time, the timeless One, the invisible, but for us visible."<sup>6</sup> So study, pay great

---

<sup>5</sup> Panagiotis Bratsiotis (1918–1982): Biblical scholar from the University of Athens, a prolific writer and a theologian of international fame.

<sup>6</sup> Saint Ignatius, *Polycarp*, 3:2.

attention to the times, and along the way keep expecting the One Who is above time, Jesus Christ, the pre-eternal Son and Word of God. Keep expecting Him. This exhortation of Saint Ignatius is very important.

However, this should not throw us into the turmoil of curiosity and the consequences of a sickly imagination. We must mention that not all people have a healthy imagination. People with a sick, wild imagination can make a mountain out of a molehill. Some of you can go out with this imagination, misquote what we say here, and say that Father Athanasios announced that World War III will be in a few years, or it will take place at a specific time. People bring this to my attention when they ask me about something they think I said and I will have no idea what they are talking about. This is because some listeners have exaggerated something that they thought they heard, and expressed it according to their imagination.

Saint Irenaeus said something excellent about this, "It is therefore more certain and less hazardous, to await the fulfillment of a prophecy than to surmise and foretell..."<sup>7</sup> Saint Andrew of Caesarea also provides us with an equally important key, "Time and experience will reveal to the vigilant."<sup>8</sup> Time will reveal these events. Now, you will ask, "Why should we bother?" and "Where is the value if these things will happen in the future?" It is important for me to know in advance what this book says in order for me to know how I will stand.

Now, let's talk about the presence of the Antichrist. When he comes, he will mesmerize the masses. He will be wise, thoughtful, a philanthropist, extremely civilized. He will have an amazing personality. He will enchant the whole world. This is what the Church fathers say. People will boast about his governing abilities, about his wisdom. He will be a universal king. The unions that are taking place geographically will one day solidify to a great union, and then the Antichrist will come forth. It may sound strange, but it is true.

This is the warning that we have from the word of God. In those days, the prophets Elijah and Enoch will appear (Revelation 11:3). These two prophets did not taste death (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5). They will serve as prophets of the present, not the future. They will call out that this man is the Antichrist, and people will be amazed. "What? He is the greatest governor this world has ever known." "No, he is the Antichrist!" They will prophesy the present. Those who are vigilant with a pure heart, and who live a spiritual life, will recognize him at once. The rest of the deceived masses will seize the prophets and hang them in the center of Jerusalem (Revelation 11:7-9).

Now, when will all these things happen? When they happen. When will we know? When the time comes. We will recognize each event at the time of its outcome. Therefore, as you see, how we approach and how we study the Revelation is very important. When we open Revelation, we feel that we are in front of some disorder, or standing before an abyss with no beginning and no end, an abyss of visions, depictions and images. However, in reality, there is no abyss, nothing of the sort. There is rhythm and order based on a seven-fold system. This is true

---

<sup>7</sup> Saint Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 5:30.

<sup>8</sup> Saint Andrew of Caesarea, *Apocalypse*, (PG 106, 340C): «ο χρόνος αποκαλύψει και η πείρα τοις νήφουσιν».

throughout this entire amazing book. It is like looking up in the sky and trying to map out six or seven thousand visible stars in an orderly fashion. Is this possible for us? No, it is out of the question. It appears chaotic. However, it is not chaotic to the astronomer. He has mapped out these stars. He studies and he knows how to look for them.

Similarly, Revelation is not chaotic. We can easily find the beginning, the middle, and the end. However, the problem is that we do not know how to interpret it. How do we interpret the Revelation without wanting to go off on a tangent? To begin, four different theories or methods of interpretation have been posited. I will mention only a few. This presents a dilemma as to which theory of interpretation to use and you will see this as we proceed with our interpretation.

The first theory or method of interpretation, which has been accepted by many Church fathers, is called cyclical. In other words, when we read Scripture we ask about the things that are reported by the prophet, "Are these things meant for this time, for the journey of the Church through history, or for the end of time?" In this instance, we also have the progressive or eschatological<sup>9</sup> method. The cyclical method takes a series of visions, a circle, or combination of seven events and suggests that *these* seven apply to the events of a particular time frame. The *second* combination of seven applies to the events of a *subsequent* period and so on, until we reach the end of time.

The second theory is the chronological method, which is not repetitive or cyclical, and does not refer to the seven-fold combination. It is a journey, wherein we can say we are now at the first chapter or at the third chapter where reference is made to the seven churches in Asia Minor. With this method, we might say that the first three chapters refer to the time of Saint John and the chapters beyond that until the last chapter refer to the time *after* Saint John until the end of history. In other words, according to the chronological theory, we could say that every chapter corresponds to a point in history.

Neither of these methods of interpretation will suffice for all prophecy. Saint Andrew of Caesarea prefers the cyclical method, but he uses *all* the methods of interpretation. In other words, we must use an eclectic method. In some areas of interpretation we will use the cyclical, in some areas the chronological, and in some the eschatological.

Some holy Fathers use a combination of these methods and this combination is called the *spiral* method. To understand this, let's say that I am ready to climb around a mountain on an uphill winding road. After climbing in a huge circle, I find myself a little higher; one more circle, and I am even higher; and as I get higher up the mountain, the circles become smaller. So, here I have the combination of the circular and the straight. I start at the base and I end up at the top. A prophecy can begin at the beginning (when Revelation was first written) and this same prophecy can actually continue until the end of times, until the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>10</sup> So,

---

<sup>9</sup> Eschatology, from the Greek *eschatos*, refers to the study of end times.

<sup>10</sup> See Bratsiotis P., *The Apocalypse of John*, 10.



as we see here, I have the cyclical interpretation, but I also have the straight line which progresses to the top. This combination is the *spiral* interpretation.

Let's see how the Church fathers use all these methods to interpret. We will look at two or three examples. Saint John says, *Children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come; therefore we know that it is the last hour* (1 John 2:18). It is the last hour. What does the last hour mean? It means that the Second Coming of Christ is at hand; there is nothing beyond that. It is the last hour because you heard that the Antichrist is coming. Thus, the Antichrist is a sign of the last hour. Many antichrists have come and this is how we know that this is the last hour.

Here we seem to be all mixed up and all confused. How can we understand all this? It is really simple. We have the main person, *the* Antichrist, with a capital A. All the others are small antichrists. They are all his forerunners. So, when is the last hour? The last hour begins from the moment Saint John wrote Revelation. Saint Paul records, *but understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress* (2 Timothy, 3:1). Holy Apostle Paul, to what last days are you referring? Saint John the Chrysostom interprets, "The last days begin at the very moment Saint Paul writes his Epistle."<sup>11</sup>

Here is one more example, to help clarify this. Christ said that Jerusalem would be destroyed: *Stone will not be left upon stone... Then the powers of the Heaven will be shaken... The sun and the moon will lose their brightness* (cf. Matthew 24:2-30). What we have here is one image with two layers. The first layer, the total destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. would take place a few years after this prophecy. The second layer of this same image is the Second Coming of Christ and the end of times. That is the grand finale of this prophecy. The first phase was, so to speak, the semifinal, and this, the second, is the final. Thus, at every moment in history since then we have been living the last hour, every moment.

What we see here are circles that get wider and wider, and at the center of these widening circles we have the procession of the prophecy. At the first circumference of the circle, we have the interpretation of the prophecy. At a second wider circumference, we have a deeper interpretation, and then a third circumference and so on. At the end, the great circumference of one huge circle will be touching upon the very, very end of times, the Second Coming of Christ. Therefore, this is how we will study Revelation, which means that this book is not something that was pertinent, or something that will become pertinent, but something that is always pertinent. Revelation does not exhaust itself at a given time; it is a universal book that enters the very Kingdom of God.

Saint Andrew of Caesarea says something very deep on this. "The prophets of the Old Testament were interpreted by many interpreters. However, many prophecies remain unfulfilled without reaching the end or the depth of the prophecy."<sup>12</sup> You may say, "But don't the prophets of the Old Testament refer to

---

<sup>11</sup> Saint John Chrysostom, *Acts*, Homily 5:2

<sup>12</sup> Saint Andrew of Caesarea, (PG 106,217A): Των παλαιών προφητών οι βιβλίοι υπο πολλών ερμηνευθείσαι έτι το βάθος των εν εαυταίς μυστηρίων τοις πάσι έρχουσι επ' εαυτών άχρι της ημέρας εκείνης εν ή της μερικής καταργουμένης γνώσεως η τελεία αναδειχθήσεται.

Christ?" Yes, but they also refer to *beyond* Christ, to His Second Coming, and to the Kingdom of God. My friends, we should never think that the prophecies of the Old Testament were all fulfilled. The coming of Christ does not exhaust the prophecies of the Old Testament. Again, Saint Andrew of Caesarea says on this, "They will not be exhausted, not even in the Kingdom of God itself because it is in the Kingdom of God especially where we will be able to understand the full depth of these prophecies."<sup>13</sup>

So, by now you may have begun to understand that Revelation is a tremendously deep and unfathomable book, and we need to approach it with a great deal of respect. At the closing of this brief introduction, I will ask you not to get discouraged if we were somewhat complex. An introduction is always difficult. The introduction was meant to shed some light on this subject, and I hope that I did not get you all confused. However, I urge you to have a little patience.

Let's continue, and we will see how beautifully this book will refresh us, how we will gain greater understanding through this analysis. This book has so many great things to offer. Thus, as we come to the end of this introduction, we must keep in mind a few basic precepts about how to stand while considering this book of God. First, we should never forget that we have in our midst the living word of God, since this book is God-inspired, like all the other books of Scripture.

Second, this word of God is deep and difficult to interpret. To gain understanding, one needs to have humility, prayer, attention, tears, and persistence. We will use the example of Saint John the Evangelist where he says, *I heard a voice, 'No one can open this scroll,' and I started to cry, because no one could learn about the contents of this scroll* (Revelation 5:1-4). The angel who was guiding him came and told him, *'Do not weep, the scroll was opened by the morning star, the Son of God, the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. So don't weep.'* Why did He open the scroll? - Because Saint John was weeping!

A third point, and something we need to be careful of, is that every conclusion we will draw from this book, whether ethical, moral, or spiritual, we should not use only to instruct others. Let us apply these points to ourselves first. When Christ will say, *You are not cold or hot, you are lukewarm. This is why I will spit you out of my mouth* (3:16) let's not say that He will spit out or throw up the others. No, we need to analyze and criticize our souls, ourselves first. I must question, "Am I also lukewarm? Maybe I am!" and then I will discover, if I have any sincerity, that yes, I am lukewarm and Christ is talking directly to me.

My friends, this is how we will be able to gain some understanding from Revelation, so its truth can be revealed to us - at least as much as is humanly possible. In this way, we can walk this golden and bright journey of the Church in the face of the blood-shedding and life-killing swords of the godless powers throughout all history.

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. (PG 106, 217A.)