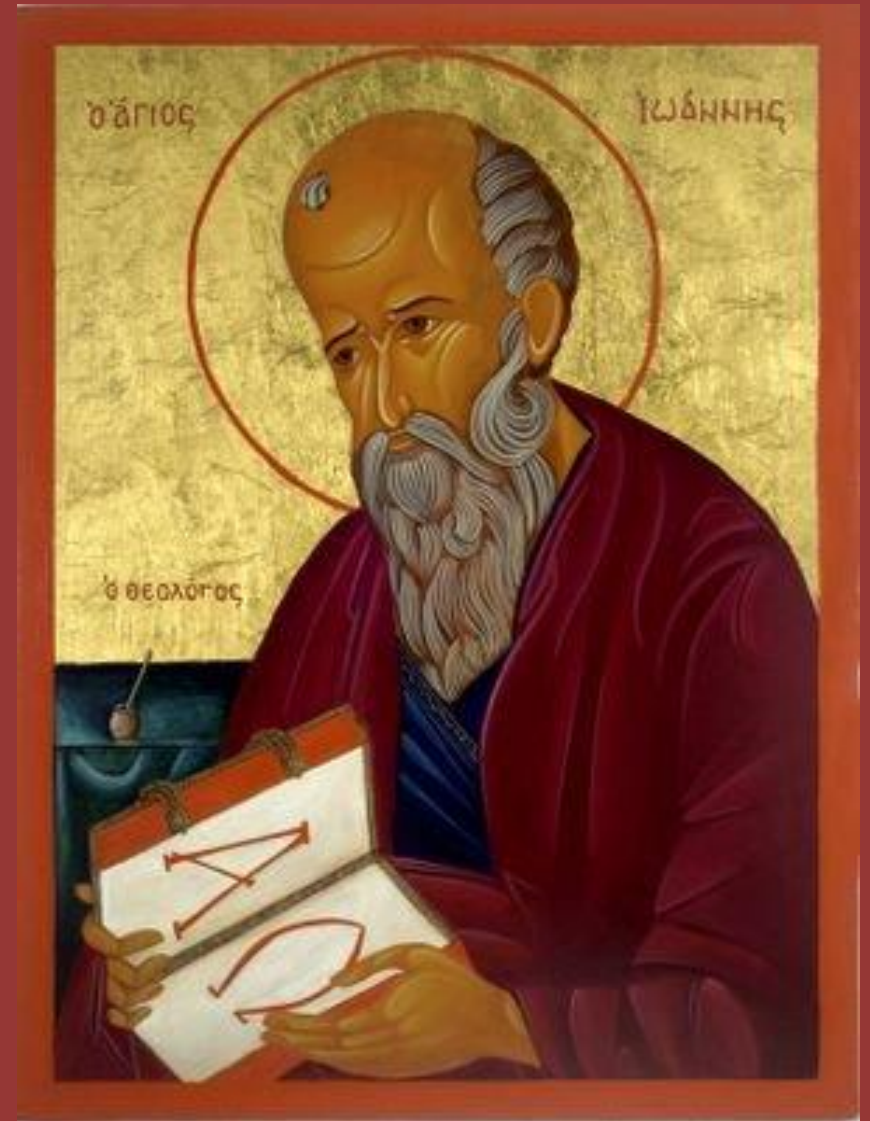


Revelation #4:

*“NOTHING
SUCCEEDS
LIKE FAILURE
– THE JOB
GOD HAS FOR
US TO DO”*

Revelation 5, 11




Introduction



Introduction



 ***"Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it" (Mark 8:35)***

Setting the Scene (Ch. 5)

- **Throne room of heaven**
- **God in control**
- **Heartfelt worship**



Setting the Scene (Ch. 5)



Praise from *"every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them"* (5:13)



Setting the Scene (Ch. 5)

- **Seven seals and trumpets = 2 series of seven judgements**



- **Fail to bring repentance, God's rule**

The Scroll and the Lamb



- **Scroll is a testament/will =
God's plan to bring in the kingdom**


The Scroll and the Lamb



- **Scroll is a testament/will =**
God's plan to bring in the kingdom
- **Lamb alone is worthy to open it**
- **Through self-sacrifice**


The Scroll and the Lamb



-  ***"The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" (verse 5)***
- **Gen. 49:9; Isaiah 11:10; Rev. 1:17-18; 22:13, 16**
 - **Warrior hero**

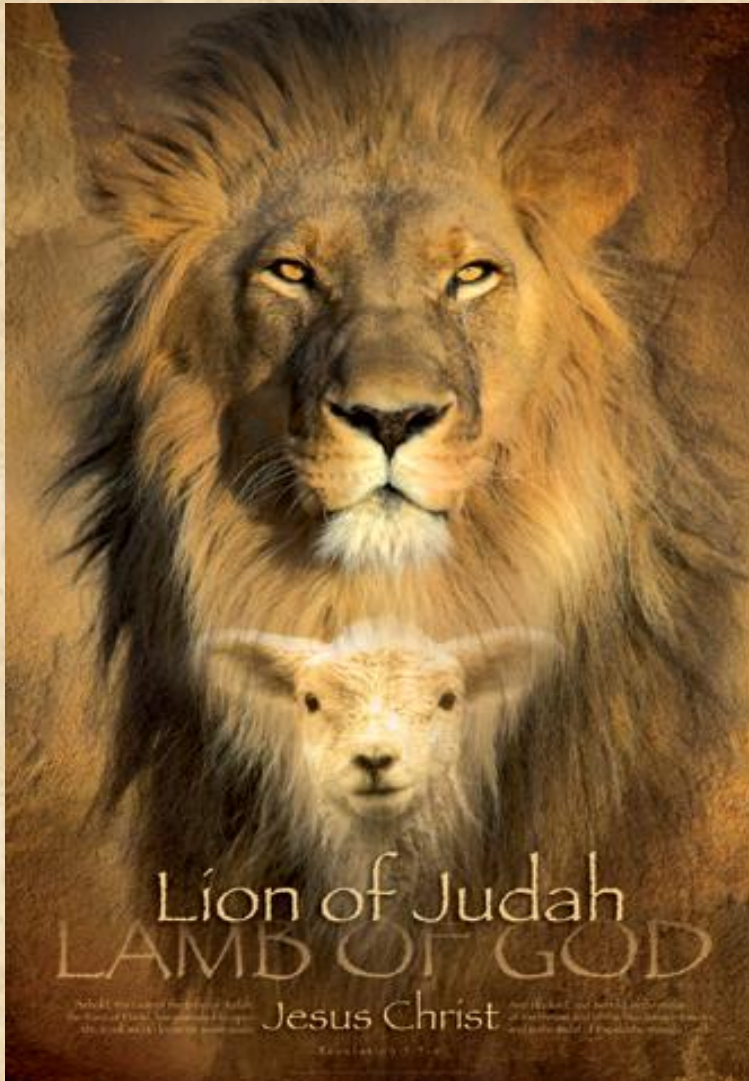
The Scroll and the Lamb



 ***"A Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne" (verse 6)***

- **Passover lamb (Ex. 12)**
- **Sacrificial lamb bearing sin (Is. 53:6)**

The Scroll and the Lamb



- **The One who conquers by defeat**
- **Plan of God centres on cross of Jesus**
- **Seeming failure is victory!**

Success through Failure

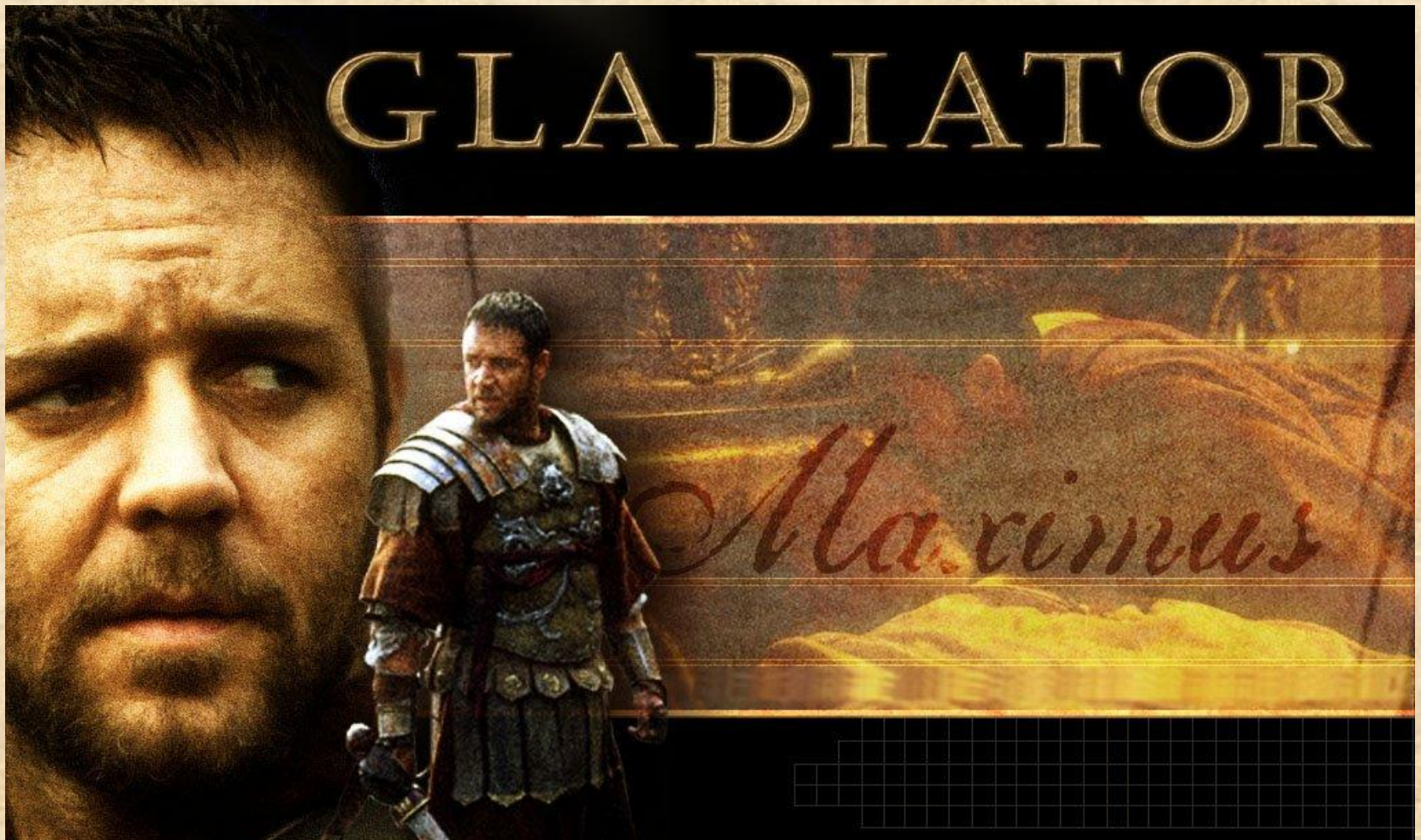
➤ Practical implications



- **“Glory” of Rome built on oppression**

Success through Failure

➤ Practical implications



Success through Failure

➤ Practical implications

- God's power is different from Rome's
- "seven eyes...seven spirits" (vs. 6)

➔ Complex image of forgiveness:



"There are seven eyes on that one stone...These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the earth...And I will remove the sin of this land in a single day...Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit" (Zechariah 3:8, 9; 4:10; 4:6)

Success through Failure

- **Practical implications**
 - **God's power is different from Rome's**
 - **"seven eyes...seven spirits" (vs. 6)**
 - ➔ **Complex image of forgiveness:**
 - **God's victory is by freedom from sin and empowerment by the Spirit, not brute force**

Success through Failure

➤ Practical implications

- Jesus:



"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, & whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28)

Success through Failure

- **Practical implications**
 - **History:**
 - **Rome's conversion through martyrs**



Success through Failure

- **Practical implications**
 - **History:**
 - **Fall of Berlin Wall through prayer**



Success through Failure

- **Practical implications for us**
 - **Do we try to achieve our goals through co-coercion or manipulation, shows of strength and superiority?**



Success through Failure

➤ **Practical implications for us**



"Those who would come after me must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their lives will lose them, but those who lose their lives for me and for the gospel will find them" (Mark 8:35)

- **True martyrdom = death to self**
- **We defeat evil the way Jesus did**

Judgements and Delays

➤ What about the judgements?

1. Judgement is the beginning of God's victory over sin and evil

• ***Seven seals, trumpets, bowls echo...***



"If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over" Lev. (26:18-23)

• **Evil, injustice must be dealt with**

• **Salvation/judgement 2 sides of coin**

Judgements and Delays


- **What about the judgements?**
- 2. Judgements not directly from God**
 - **What are these judgements?**
 - **Disasters common to every generation**
 - **Natural outcomes of sin, demonic forces**

Judgements and Delays

- **What about the judgements?**
- 2. Judgements not directly from God**
 - **Images :**
 - **Old Testament (e.g. Plagues of Egypt)**
 - **Contemporary events (Vesuvius, Parthian hordes)**
 - **Reveal God's judgement vs sin**



Judgements and Delays

- **Judgement to lead to repentance**
-  **Martyrs cry out "*how long?*" (6:10)**
- **Delay – to give time for repentance**
- **Tension: end injustice ↔ time to repent**
- **Demonstrated by:**
 - **Judgements graded (6:8; 8:7)**
 - **Delays in judgement**

Judgements and Delays

- Judgement to lead to repentance
- Unsuccessful:



"The rest of mankind that were not killed by these plagues still did not repent of the work of their hands; they did not stop worshipping demons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone and wood - idols that cannot see or hear or walk. Nor did they repent of their murders, their magic arts, their sexual immorality or their thefts"
(9:20-21)

Our Role in God's Plan

- **Stage set for opening of scroll**
 - **Reveals God's plan for the church:**
 - **WE are to put into practice the principle that nothing succeeds like failure!**
 - **Mercy extended through our witness and martyrdom**
 - **God has a job for us to do!**

Our Role in God's Plan

➤ Chapter 5:



"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God" (5:9, 10)

- **We have been saved to serve**

Our Role in God's Plan

- **Chapter 7:**
 - **Battle imagery to martyrdom**
 - **144,000 (verse 4)**
 - **Stylized number: 12 (God's people) x 1000 (great magnitude)**
 - **OT census for military service = whole people of God**

Our Role in God's Plan

➤ Chapter 7:

- **Battle imagery to martyrdom**
- **Soldiers to martyrs:**



"After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb" (vs. 9)

- ***144,000 = "Great Multitude"***

Our Role in God's Plan

➤ Chapter 7:

- **Battle imagery to martyrdom**
- **Transformation of Lion to Lamb (5:9)**



People of God... *"Wearing white robes and holding palm branches..."* have come through *"the great tribulation"* (7:9, 14)

Our Role in God's Plan

➤ Chapter 7:

- Battle imagery to martyrdom**
- Transformation of Lion to Lamb (5:9)**
- White robes = Sharing in Jesus' suffering**
- Palm branches = victory procession**
- Jesus conquered through death – so do we**

Our Role in God's Plan

- **Chapters 10 & 11:**
 - **Little scroll (10:8, 9) = scroll of ch. 5**
 - **11:1-13 = key to meaning of Book of Revelation!**
 - **11:14-19 = 7th trumpet = final victory**
 - **Chapters 12-22 = expansions of chapter 11 (like web page 'click')**

God's Plan Revealed

➤ Chapter 11:1-13:

- **Measuring of temple (vss. 1-2)**
- **Two witnesses prophesy then are killed (vss. 3-10)**
- **They are resurrected (vss. 11-12)**
- **Great earthquake followed by great turning to God (vs. 13)**

God's Plan Revealed

- **A parable of the Church:**
 - **2 witnesses (vs. 4) = Moses & Elijah**



**Elijah: *"the power to shut up the sky
so that it will not rain"***
(1 Kings 17, 18)



Moses: *"the power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague"* (Exodus 7-11)

God's Plan Revealed

➤ **A parable of the Church:**

- **2 witnesses (vs. 4) = Moses & Elijah**



Elijah: *"the power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain"*

(1 Kings 17, 18)



Moses: *"the power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague"*

(Exodus 7-11)

– Vs. Pagan world of their times

God's Plan Revealed

- **A parable of the Church:**
 - **2 witnesses (vs. 4):**
 - **Olive trees, lampstands (Zech. 4:1-6)**
 - **7 lampstands = two (Rev. 1:12)**
 - **Represent Church as a whole**
 - **We are called to be:**
 - **shining lights**
 - **prophets, witnesses through our "deaths"**

God's Plan Revealed

- **Protecting of the Church; shown by:**
 - **Measuring (vs. 2)**
= "sealing" of 7:3
 - **42 months/1260 days/3.5 years (vss. 2, 3, 9, 11)**
= represent half of 7 (fullness) – i.e. a limited time period
 - **Resurrection of witnesses (vs. 11)**
= Jesus' resurrection
= death confirms testimony

God's Plan Revealed

- **The world repents:**
 - **Earthquake leads to repentance (vs. 13)**
 - **Destruction limited – only 1/10 destroyed**
 - **Turning to God:**
 - 📖 ***"The survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven" (vs. 13)***
 - **Church's martyrdom brings salvation**

Our Job Description

➤ **To be a martyr!**

- **Not literal death but death to self**
- **Our witness involves suffering**



***"Witness of Jesus"* (12:17, 19: 10)**

≠ "witness to Jesus"

= witness Jesus bore to truth of God

Our Job Description

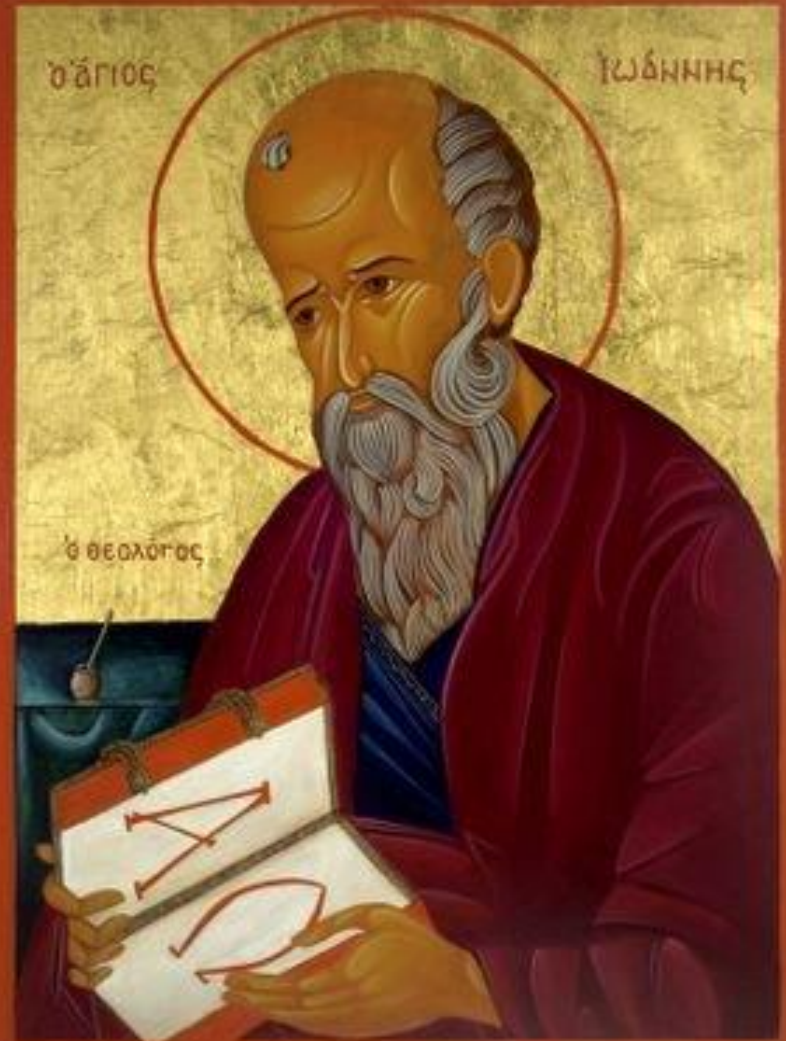
- **To be a martyr!**
- **Not literal death but death to self**
- **Our witness involves suffering**
 - **Live the truth – move out of denial**
 - **Speak the truth – be prophetic**
 - **Message of repentance**
 - **Challenge of “tolerance”**
 - **Speak the truth in love**



Conclusion

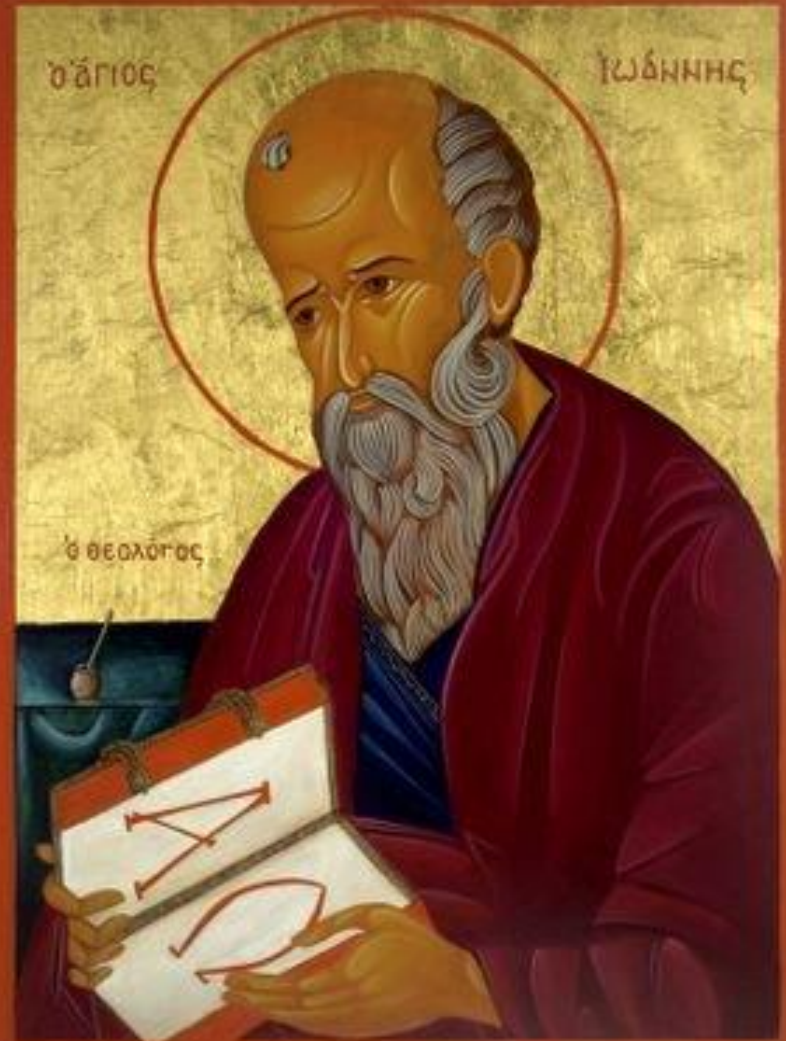
- Our job - to be God's witnesses

📖 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (Matt. 24:14)*



Conclusion

- We have been redeemed *from all the nations* (5:9)
- To bear prophetic witness *to all the nations* (11:3-13)



Questions?

