

Wednesday Teaching Series
Revelation 5:1-14
March 11, 2009

The Book of Revelation
Lesson #8

Review: Chapter Four

- A. John is invited up to an open door in heaven where he gets a close-up view of the throne room of God.
- B. The one on the throne does not have a human form, but is described by the brilliance of light that reflects off of the platform of glass before the throne.
- C. The twenty-four elders who may represent saints of all time or be of some angelic form sit on the thrones around the main throne and offer perpetual worship.

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; for You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:9-10 NKJV

And that sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." Revelation 5:9-10 NASV

- D. From the throne proceeds both brilliant light and the awesome demonstration of thunder and lightning reminiscent of Sinai.
- E. Also around the throne and the four living creatures (cherubim; like angels) worshipping with the 24 elders.

Scene is prepared for chapter five.

NOTE: The focus in chapter four was God, enthroned in heaven and surrounded by adoring and worshipping elders and living creatures but now in chapter five it moves to the Lamb who alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny. The worship of God for his role in creation gives way to the worship of the Lamb for his work of redemption.

I. The Sealed Scroll

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. Revelation 5:1-4 NKJV

A. The book itself

1. Some see it as "future events" or the designs and methods of divine providence towards the church and the world."
2. Some (Preterist) see it as a scroll of sentence on Jerusalem for their shedding of righteous blood and John has entered the courtroom just in time to hear the sentence.

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Matthew 23:25 NKJV

3. Others; the redemptive plan of God or his last will and testament, in the right hand as symbol of authority, and written in and out so that all space is filled and nothing can be added.
4. Still others (Henry Morris, Ironside, Criswell) "It is nothing less than the title deed to earth itself."
 - a. Rome had required a will to be sealed seven times.
 - b. The events of the Tribulation (7 seals) are part of God's reclaiming for Himself control over the earth, forfeited to Satan by the fall of Adam.

Who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:14 NKJV

The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, And those who fear Your name, small and great, And should destroy those who destroy the earth." Revelation 11:18 NKJV

Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Revelation 11:15 NKJV

- c. Like real estate bought back by near kinsman; only Jesus could do this.

Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 1 Peter 1:18-19 NKJV

- 5. Most likely; a scroll of unparalleled significance containing the full account of what God was going to do in His sovereign will to bring the world to its final and complete destiny.

- a. Background provided by Ezekiel:

Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe. Ezekiel 2:10 NKJV

- b. Common thought:

Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. Psalms 139:16 NKJV

- c. In Daniel 8, the prophet is told to seal the vision:

"And the vision of the evenings and mornings Which was told is true; Therefore seal up the vision, For it refers to many days in the future." Daniel 8:26 NKJV

And He will spread out His hands in their midst As a swimmer reaches out to swim, And He will bring down their pride Together with the trickery of their hands. Isaiah 25:11 NKJV

- d. Now the time has come, seals will be removed and history will move swiftly to its final consummation.

B. The Mighty Angel (2)

1. Possibly Gabriel: Calls for someone to open the scroll.

I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. And a rainbow was on his head, his face was like the sun, and his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little book open in his hand. And he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. Revelation 10:1-4 NKJV

Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, "Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be found anymore. Revelation 18:21 NKJV

2. The call is for someone worthy to open the book.

- C. The call to all creation; but no one found worthy.

NOTE: To pour out judgment; none is worthy (v. 3)

- D. John weeps because it appears that the plan of God will be postponed; no one is worthy (v. 4).
 1. He had been called up to see what will take place afterwards.
 2. Is not able to see if book is not opened.

II. The Appearance of the Lamb

But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals." 6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Revelation 5:5-7 NKJV

A. The scroll will not remain opened (v. 5).

1. One has triumphed and is therefore worthy to open the book.
2. Lion of the Tribe of Judah: Root of David

Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people. Genesis 49:9-10 NKJV

There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. Isaiah 11:1 NKJV

3. He alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny and carry out the final dissolution of all forces opposing the eternal Kingdom of God.

B. The Prevailing Lamb

1. Having been slain; bearing the marks of sacrificial slaughter.
2. Standing in readiness of action; prevailed.

VICTORY THROUGH SACRIFICE IS THE THEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT!

3. Seven horns; all power-OMNIPOTENT
4. Seven eyes; all wisdom-OMNISCIENCE

NOTE: Fullness of Holy Spirit Wisdom

The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. Isaiah 11:2 NKJV

C. He takes the scroll (v. 7)

III. The Worship of the Lamb

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:8-10 NKJV

A. Prayers of the saints:

NOTE: have been praying "Thy Kingdom come" is now about to happen.

B. Worthiness of the Lamb to open the book is 3-fold:

1. He was slain (historical fact).
2. He purchased people for God (interpretation of the fact).
3. Made them a kingdom of priests (result of the fact).

C. NOTE: Same ascription of worth to One on the throne and to the Lamb.

"You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:11 NKJV

And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, Revelation 5:9 NKJV

High Christology!

IV. Angels and all of Creation join the Song

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" 14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. Revelation 5:11-14 NKJV

A. The adoration of the Lamb moves out in ever-widening circles.

1. Innumerable host of angles.
2. In verses 9 and 10; elders and creatures.
3. Verse 13 all of creation praises him.
4. The universal nature of his redemption calls for universal response.

B. The elders bring the worship to a close (v. 14).

1. First to praise in the throne room; vision in chapter four.
2. Now, they appropriately bring it to a close in chapter five.

Conclusion: Chapter 5 reveals a central theme that governs the entire book of Revelation.

1. By his sacrificial death, the Lamb has taken control of the course of history and guaranteed its future.
2. Hosts of heaven honor his work with their worship.
3. His work has transformed humanity, universe.
4. Countless angels circle his throne to worship him.
5. The vision of grandeur and glory prepares John to share with his readers the more solemn aspects of the judgments to come.
6. A vivid portrayal of the one who has won the battle over sin will supply the confidence for the saints to have a hope that is strong and steadfast in time of trouble.