

sermon study summary

January 20 / 21, 2024

Revelation Part 9 – Worthy is the Lamb

Revelation Chapters 4 and 5

Speaker: Dr. Ashwin Ramani

The early church faced relentless persecution. It seemed as if Caesar, not God, was on the throne. John's vision offered all the answers the early church needed.

Where is God in the midst of chaos? Seated on the throne. God is in charge. No words can capture God's appearance! The occupant of the throne is beyond description, but John did his best to describe God's dazzling beauty in terms of beautiful colours and precious jewels. The rainbow which encircles the throne of God represents God's covenant promise that He will never again destroy the earth with a flood.

In God's right hand, a scroll sealed with seven seals was waiting for the rightful recipient to open it. What was inside? The rest of the book of Revelation! The scroll was written on both sides, showing that nothing needs to be added. God's ultimate plan is complete and His purpose cannot be thwarted.

John wept because no one in the entire universe was worthy to put God's plan of redemption into effect. Then one of the elders spoke into John's despair. "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah ... has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll."

John turned around, expecting to see a glorious roaring Lion. Instead, he saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain. The mighty Lion won by being slaughtered as a Lamb. The Lamb may be outwardly meek, but he has seven horns signifying complete power. He has seven eyes, signifying that He is all knowing. And He is filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Lion of Judah triumphed not by tearing his prey but by allowing Himself to be torn apart. At the cross, the Lion became the Lamb who was slain. And through his shed blood, He won the most decisive victory. What seemed to be the defeat of Jesus turned out to be the greatest victory ever!

The fitting response of humans, as seen in Revelation chapters 4 and 5, is a crescendo of worship. The 24 elders surrounding the throne symbolize the 12 tribes of Israel in the OT and 12 apostles in the NT. They are a symbolic reference to all the believers of all times, encompassing both the old and new testament ages. The four living creatures are a reference to all of creation. The lion represents wild animals, the ox represents domesticated animals, the man represents humanity, and the eagle represents birds.

The 24 elders and four living creatures, representing all the redeemed and all of creation, join in a unified chorus of worship. They declare praise and glory to the Creator God who made all things and who sustains all things! "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things" (Rev 4:11).

In chapter 5, the center of worship is the Lamb. "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation" (5:9). This is what worship in heaven looks like! All people groups, all language groups, and people of every culture who have been washed in the blood of Jesus join together in exalting the name of Jesus. This is the song of heaven. This is the picture of the throne room of God! All believers proclaim with passion and conviction, "The Lamb who redeemed us is worthy." He alone deserves the praise of all people and all creation!

sermon study guide

IN – PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What is the most memorable storm or natural event that you have ever witnessed?
2. How do you mentally picture God? What does it reveal about your relationship to Him (and perhaps to your own father)?

UP – PURSUE GOD

3. Have one person slowly read Revelation 4:1-11 and the rest with eyes closed imagine the scene. What stands out to you and why? What does the rainbow encircling God's throne mean for our relationship to Him and to the world?
4. Read Revelation 5:1-10. Why is Christ the only one who can open the scroll? Why is that important and what does it mean for us? In what ways can we follow Jesus' example of being a lion conquering as a lamb?

OUT – PURSUE MISSION

5. When was the last time you were obsessed with your circumstances? How did looking towards heaven and worshiping Jesus give perspective?
6. Read Revelation 5:8-12. Imagine yourself in the scene around the throne. Who of your loved ones are with you? How can you pray with more faith and urgency that those who are not yet believers will be with you?

For Personal Reflection / Prayer:

Revelation 5:8-14 declares that Jesus is worthy of all blessing and honour and glory. What role does worship play in your everyday life? How can you better incorporate a lifestyle of praise and worship to our Saviour Jesus Christ?

THE WORD (NIV)

Revelation 4:1-6

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."² At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.³ And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.⁴ Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.⁶ Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

Revelation 5:1-5

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.² And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

This week's writers: Elsa Henderson, Gene and Karen Gibbs, Mark Eckstein, Sandi Somers and Jorel Quemuel