

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Vision of the Lamb, Part 2

Scripture: Revelation 5:5-8

Code: 66-21

Revelation chapter 5, this will be the second in our series in this chapter and I've entitled this chapter, "A Vision of the Lamb...A Vision of the Lamb."

Filling in a little bit of background for you, Isaiah the Old Testament prophet was given the privilege of seeing ahead to the day when the curse on the earth would be reversed, when paradise would be restored, regained. And Isaiah said, "The day will come, for example, when the desert will blossom like a rose. The day will come when the waste places of the earth will be like the gardens of paradise. The day will come when the wolf will dwell with the lamb and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the lion will eat straw like an ox. The day will come when children will play with snakes and they will not be hurt or destroyed by them."

And Isaiah in all of those terms was describing a restored earth, an uncursed earth. The Scripture goes on to say that human life will be long once again, and when someone dies at the age of 100, they will die as a baby. During that time to come when the curse is reversed, Satan will be chained, he will be bound, he will be out of the picture and righteousness and truth and peace will fill the earth and the glory of God will be everywhere. Christ will rule with a rod of iron and all the world will come and bow down and worship Him.

Isaiah was talking about a time when the whole of creation is redeemed from the curse that came because of the Fall. Now man has always dreamed about such a utopia, a perfect world, a perfect world of good, a perfect world of peace, a perfect world of love, a perfect world of justice, harmless world, a harmless universe where fear is unnecessary and joy abounds.

But no matter how he may dream of that kind of world, no matter how he may plan for it, no matter what human institutions he may invent or devise to attempt to achieve it, with all of his inventions, with all of his intentions, with all of his designs, with all of his efforts to cure human ills, the world just gets worse...worse and worse and worse and worse, more polluted and more polluted and more polluted. And the question keeps looming--who can bring back Eden? Who can restore paradise? Who can reverse the curse? Who can bring us utopia?

Well the monumental chapter before us answers those queries. There's only one person who has the right, one person who has the power to take back the universe from sin and from Satan's usurping rebellion. That one person is the main character in this chapter. He is the central person in this incredible vision.

Now chapter 5 really picks up where chapter 4 ended, at the throne of God in heaven. We noted back in verse 1 of chapter 4 that John was taken up to heaven. He was told to, "Come up here and immediately I was in the Spirit," he says, "and behold, a throne was standing in heaven." He was

taken instantaneously into the heaven of heavens, the abode of God where God's throne is. And the experience of being at the throne of God, then, began in chapter 4 and the same scenario extends into chapter 5. We are in the same location in the same vision with John. The scene in chapter 5 is still the sky. The throne of God is still central. The cherubim are there. And the enthroned elders representing the raptured church are there. The ruby-diamond blazing glory of God is shining out through an emerald rainbow and bouncing off a clear crystal platform on which the throne is set. From the very throne of God comes lightning and thunder flashing. We see in that scene the Holy Spirit shining in seven-fold glory and everything around God, every being around God is offering Him worship. And so, chapter 4 ends with this glorious scene of the throne of God and all of both redeemed and raptured men and the spirits of the saints and the angels as well worshiping God. Now as you come into chapter 5, some new action is introduced and a new central character is introduced as well. As you come into chapter 5, God Himself begins to stir and to move because He's starting now to judge the earth and universe. He's starting now to act against sin. So in chapter 5 John is still at the throne in his vision, but God begins to act. And the first thing He does is noted in verse 1, "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne," that is God, "a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals." In the up-turned palm of God we see this little scroll. This is the title deed to the universe. God has it. It is rightfully His. It is the official document that grants the created universe to God by ownership.

Now the contents of this scroll are all sealed inside of it and a summary of it is written on the outside. The contents of the scroll will be known to us as we begin in chapter 6, where the Lamb breaks one of the seven seals and then another of the seven until all seven are broken and the scroll is fully unrolled, describing not the why of the universe belonging to God, but how He will take it back. Most of those kinds of official documents sealed like that, title deeds sealed like that, had inside a description of why the person designated possessed whatever the property was. This scroll doesn't have the why, it has the how. And when it's unrolled it doesn't tell us why God owns it, it tells us how He is going to take it over. It is a moot point about why He owns it since He made it. He is God. And so, as the little scroll sits, as it were, on the up-turned palm of God, it contains the judgments by which God will in a very short time take possession of His created universe and restore it to a condition of paradise. These then are the judgments that will unfold from the scroll that begin in chapter 6 and run all the way through chapter 19 of Revelation.

Now the question that comes is this...God has the scroll in His hand, but who is worthy to enact it? Who is the executor of this document? Who is going to pull it off? We noted the first point then in this text is the search for the worthy one...the search for the worthy one.

Verse 2, "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it."

John is weeping because he wanted to see the world changed. He wanted to see the world rid of evil and sin. He wanted to see the Kingdom of God come. He wanted to see guilt and sin and shame

done away with. He wanted to see Satan bound. He wanted to see Israel saved. He wanted to see Christ exalted. He wanted all of those things that had been promised. But no one came forward. And so he wept. But his weeping, as we noted last time, was needless because in verse 5 we read this: "And one of the elders said to me, `Stop weeping, your tears are unnecessary. Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David has overcome so as to open the scroll and its seven seals."

We move then from the search for the worthy one to the selection of the worthy one. John knew that Jerusalem had been destroyed in 70 A.D., this is at least 25 years later. John knew that Judaism had killed the Messiah. John knew the Jews had been massacred and scattered. John knew that the new young church was being severely persecuted. John knew that there was no king to defend them on earth or to redeem Israel. And so he wept. Everything seemed to be going badly. Was there no one to change this? Was there no one to take the scroll and break its seals and take back the universe? And so, one of the elders tells him to stop weeping. Why? "Behold," what does that mean? Look.

He calls his attention to an emerging person on the scene. "Look, the Lion...Look, the root of David." No elder could redeem the universe. No angel could redeem the universe. But here is one who can. "Look." And he points to the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah. If you know anything about the Old Testament you know that that is a title for the Messiah, that is a messianic title. It's taken out of Genesis 49:8 through 10, one of the earliest titles for Messiah. The Messiah would come and the Messiah would be a Lion. Genesis 49:8 says, "Judah, your brother, shall praise you, your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies, your father's sons shall bow down to you, Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches. he lies down as a lion. And as a lion who dares rouse him up. The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

Judah is a lion. And Judah will produce a lion who will have the scepter and who will bring about the rule that shall cause all the nations to bow down. The Messiah then became known as the lion that would come from the tribe of Judah. Lion because of his fierceness, lion because he would come in strength and destruction and devastation. It speaks of the Messiah as a strong powerful menacing destructive and deadly personality. In fact, the Jews even in the time of Jesus expected their Messiah to be a lion. That's why it was so very hard for them to understand Jesus Christ. They expected the lion to come, menacing and destructive and destroy the Romans and destroy the Greeks and destroy the pagans. And that in part is why they killed Jesus because He was...He was not lion-like. There was nothing fierce about Him There was nothing devastating, menacing and destructive about Him. Quite the opposite. He insisted on going about healing everyone. And He insisted on not doing anything that would show any kind of political or military power.

Their Messiah would be a lion. And their Messiah would rip and tear and destroy the enemies. What they didn't realize was He was a lion, indeed He was a lion, but His lion-like judgment still waits for the right day. It is yet to come. But the Messiah was to be a lion from the tribe of Judah. You know as well as I do that the genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ comes through the tribe of Judah. Jesus Christ was born, as it were, from between the feet of Judah, from that tribe He came forth. He is that

lion, but His lion-like work awaits the moment anticipated here in Revelation 5.

He is also called in verse 5 the root of David. That is another messianic title. The Old Testament very clearly indicated that the Messiah would be a Son of David, that He would be an offspring of David, that His life would come from David. It says in Isaiah 11:1, "Then a shoot, or a root, will spring from the stem of Jesse and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him." And it talks about Him. "With righteousness He will judge the poor, He will strike the earth with a rod of His mouth and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. And righteousness will be the belt about His loins and faithfulness the belt about His waist." And it tells us what I told you earlier about His kingdom, the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie with the kid, the calf, the young lion, the fatling together, a little boy will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze. Their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like an ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra and the wean child put his hand in the viper's den, they will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. That's talking about His Kingdom. He'll come. He'll be a shoot out of David. And He will have the Spirit of the Lord on Him. And He will be righteous. And He will be just. And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth.

Every Jew expected that. They expected that when the root of David came, He would come with force, He would come with a rod. He would come in destruction. He would come in devastation. He would come and He would force the wicked of the earth to succumb to His authority. He would judge sinners. He would be from the royal blood of David. He would be out of the Davidic line. And indeed He was. The Lord Jesus Christ came from the line of David, both as to His father and as to His mother. Joseph was in the line of David and so was Mary. The genealogies that are given in the gospel record point out very clearly that Jesus Christ was born of the lineage of David. He was a righteous branch, a righteous root from Jesse, the father of David, David's line.

In the end of Revelation, chapter 22 verse 16, Jesus Himself says, "I am the root and the offspring of David." But because the prophecy in Isaiah was associated so much with destruction and so much with judgment and so much with devastation and then the setting up of His Kingdom where all of those things would take place that I read to you about how the animal kingdom would all of a sudden be friendly to each other, and all of those things would change, because they saw the Messiah coming in judgment and setting up this kind of very visible tangible kingdom and Jesus didn't do that, they didn't accept Him as their Messiah. O momentarily they did, momentarily in Matthew 21:9 on what we call Palm Sunday they said, "Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." But by the end of that week they had seen Him crucified, not as a victor but what appeared to them to be a victim. They had seen Him go through a mock trial and never assert any of His power. They saw Him played with and toyed with by the Romans as well as by the Herods, and they knew at least in their own minds that this doesn't fulfill our anticipation of what the offspring of David is going to do. This is no king. This is no shoot out of the royal line. This is no blue-blood. Why doesn't He take His authority and set up His kingdom as it's described?

He wasn't like a king and because He didn't act like a king they killed Him. Because He didn't act like a lion they killed Him. But now John sees Him step forth again. The elder says to him, "Look, the lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David." You see Him? Now He's moving forth. Now He's going to act like a lion and now He's going to act like a king, like a monarch. He's going to come in fury. He's going to come ferocious, devastating, destructive. He's going to come in furious judgment against the nations of the world and establish His rightful throne. The elder says, "He has overcome, so as to open the scroll and its seven seals." This is none other than Jesus Christ. He is the rightful King from David's loins, both through Mary and Joseph. Joseph being His adopted father also in the line of David. He is the fierce lion with the power to destroy, the power to devastate.

He had told people when He first came that He could have done it if He had wanted to even then. He said, "If I wanted to I could call for a legion of angels to come to My rescue." But there was something to be done first. There was this whole matter of overcoming sin, overcoming Satan, overcoming demons, overcoming death, overcoming hell that had to take place. As Jesus moved toward the cross, in John 12:31 He said, "Now judgment is upon this world, now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." He knew when He went to the cross that He was starting what He would finish some day in the future. In John chapter 14 and verse 30, "I will not speak much more with you," He said, "for the ruler of the world is coming but he has nothing on Me." I'm going into combat with Satan and I will win.

In the sixteenth chapter of John and the eleventh verse, "The Spirit convicts of judgment because the ruler of this world has been judged." That anticipates the cross. The first thing Christ had to do before He conquered the nations of the world, before He came as a fierce lion, as a reigning king, was to go into mortal combat with the usurper, Satan. Because it was he, according to Hebrews 2, that held the power of death which keeps all humanity in bondage all their life long. It was he who had usurped the rule in the world. It was he who has been running rampant with his demons over the earth.

But in His death and resurrection, He conquered Satan. He gave the fatal blow that Genesis 3:15 says would be the blow to the serpent's head. And there the sentence was passed. And there the overcoming was done. And there the one who held you captive to death all your life long, the one who owned you, as it were, and who would own you forever in hell has his power broken. There judgment was set on him and victory over sin and Satan and demons and death and hell was won. And He had to do that first. He had to win salvation. He had to deal a death blow to Satan and demons. He had to conquer death itself.

And the elder says, "This Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has overcome." He has overcome. Colossians puts it in a marvelous way. "He delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of His beloved Son in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

God used Christ to overcome. And John has already known the word "overcome." He used it numerous times, didn't he, in the letters to the churches as he was inspired to write those seven letters in chapters 2 and 3, "We are the overcomers because Christ overcame and we overcome in Him." We then become the recipients of His overcoming.

In Colossians chapter 2 verse 13, "And you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him." When He overcame, you overcame, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us. And has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them having triumphed over them through Him." Who are they? Demons. He triumphed over all of the demons and Satan himself. He conquered them at the cross. He conquered sin. He delivered us into His own Kingdom.

And so, it is essential for us to understand that He couldn't be the lion of judgment and He couldn't be the king of glory until He had first been the lamb. And now...by now John knows the overcomer...by the way, the verb "overcome," nikao, from which we get Nike, to overcome, to be the victor. By now John knows who he's looking for. And he's not disappointed when he turns to look, verse 6, "And I saw between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders, a Lamb standing as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth." The elder who speaks to him says, "Look," and he looks at this amazing scene with a ruby-diamond glow coming off God through an emerald rainbow, bouncing off a crystal platform intermingled with flashing thunders and cracking lightning, through the magnificent four living creatures described in Ezekiel chapter 1 as like spinning wheels of light, through the twenty-four thrones upon which are seated the twenty-four elders and in the amazing glory and blazing splendor and majesty of this scene, his eyes are drawn in between all of this, he says, he sees a Lamb...a Lamb. He probably was looking for...what?...a lion, or maybe a king. But in the midst of the saints enthroned in the glorious cherubim in the mingled glory of God's presence, someone moves to the throne. Is it a lion? No. It's a lamb. It's not just the word for lamb, it's the word for a little lamb, it's the diminutive form, arnios(?), not arnion(?) but arnios which means a pet lamb, a little lamb.

That's very fitting, by the way. Do you remember your Old Testament history about the Passover? The Jew who was the head of the house had the task during Passover to select a lamb. It had to be a lamb offered as sacrifice to God. It had to be a spotless lamb, without a blemish. It had to be the perfect lamb, the best lamb. And before they sacrificed the lamb they had to bring it into the house. And you remember how long they had to keep it? Four days...four days that little tender lamb lived with the family, four days they snuggled and cuddled the lamb, four days it became the pet of the children and then it was violently slain. And God was sending them a message through that symbolism that the One who is the ultimate Lamb will be One who is precious. And the slaying of that lamb will be a sacrifice. It would have been no sacrifice particularly to bring in a strange lamb and slay it, but one that had become a pet. And John looked and he saw a little pet lamb...not a lion, but a lamb. But the lamb is the lion.

There are just a few references to Jesus as the Lamb in the other books of the Bible. I won't belabor it but if you go back to Isaiah 53 you will find there that Jesus is described as a Lamb before His shearers.

When you come into the New Testament there are only about four occasions prior to the book of Revelation where He is specifically called a lamb. In John 1, "Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," being one of them. Another in John 1, the same chapter. Another in Acts 8:32 and then a more familiar one in 1 Peter 1:19, those words that tell us that He is a Lamb without blemish and without spot. But this term "lamb" then is only used concerning Christ about six times throughout Scripture, until you get to Revelation. In the book of Revelation alone it is used twenty-eight times...twenty-eight times. It's really a very key title for the Son of God in this letter.

Now this is not just any lamb, but you'll notice this lamb is standing. That's very important. What that means is it's on its feet...it's alive, it's moving. Here he sees Christ in the figure of a lamb on His feet and moving. But also a lamb standing as if slain. The lamb is bearing the scars from death wounds. The deadly wounds on the Lamb are still visible. But the Lamb is alive. The powers of earth and hell had come together to kill the Lamb by God's determined counsel. They killed Him in His last great conflict on earth. But He is alive. He is standing and He still bears the scars of His death.

You remember how even after His resurrection Jesus showed them the nail prints in His hands and feet and His side. The Lamb had death wounds but the Lamb was alive. And you might ask the question in your mind immediately, "Now wait a minute, you mean to tell me this Lamb is going to come out and enter into another battle with Satan? I mean, He's going to come out as a Lamb against a dragon? I wouldn't pit a pet lamb against a dragon, would you?"

And Satan is described in chapter 12 as a dragon. "You mean this lamb is going to come out against demon locusts and filthy foul hellish demon frogs and millions of world soldiers armed to the teeth to fight against Him? This little pet lamb? Is the Lamb up to it? Didn't He lose last time? Won't He maybe lose again?"

But such thinking is wrong. I've already told you He didn't lose last time, He won. The ruler of this world has been judged. The kingdom of darkness has had its power broken. The dominion of sin is shattered. The kingdom of darkness has been invaded and millions of souls have been taken captive into the kingdom of light. What He did on the cross cost Him His life, but He didn't lose. He disarmed the principalities and the powers. He descended into hell, as it were, and pronounced His triumph over them...says Peter. No, He didn't lose, He won and He'll win again. He'll win again. The first time He came as a Lamb He died. But He redeemed us. He redeemed us by paying a price that was necessary, because Peter says we could never have been redeemed by silver or gold, but only with the precious blood as of a Lamb unblemished and spotless...the blood of Christ. He came and He won. He defeated death. He defeated Satan. He defeated demons. He defeated sin. He defeated hell. The Lamb is up to the task because the Lamb is a Lion and the Lamb is the King of kings. It is His death as a Lamb that now qualifies Him to be a Lion and a monarch.

He stands and He stands alive. And He moves now toward the final conflict. Looking back at verse 6 again, it describes this Lamb in quite interesting terms. This, remember, is in a vision, almost indescribable. But it says He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits, or the seven-fold Spirit of God sent out into all the earth.

Now what does this mean? Well, animals had horns and in the animal kingdom a horn always represented power because that's what animals use them for...to exert their power in combat. Animals who have horns use those horns to inflict wounds on their enemies. And so a horn became the symbol of power in the animal world. Very often you find it so in the Scripture. Seven horns simply means seven being the number of perfection, completion that He was perfect power. He was the sovereign almighty, all powerful warrior. He was coming as a little pet lamb, but a very unusual one with seven horns, that is having perfect power, sovereignty, might. And then it says He had seven eyes. Again seven being the number of perfect or completion, this speaks of knowledge, understanding, omniscience. He could see and comprehend everything. He knows exactly what's going on. He knows exactly what to do and He has the preeminent power to do it.

In fact, those eyes are described as the seven-fold Spirit of God sent out into all the earth. That most interesting description is repeated now for the third time. We saw it in chapter 1 verse 4, chapter 4 verse 5. The Holy Spirit three times now has been defined as a seven-fold Spirit. And I don't want to go back over all of the detail, we've covered it each time, but just simply to say it refers to the fullness of the Spirit. It goes back again to Isaiah chapter 11, that same chapter in which the Messiah is called the root of David, in which He is going to come in severe punishing judgment, in which He will set up a Kingdom where the lion will lie down with the lamb and all the rest of those things, that same chapter also describes the seven-fold ministry of the Spirit. He is the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of counsel, the Spirit of strength, the Spirit of knowledge, the Spirit of fear. All seven describe the fullness of the Spirit. Zechariah 4:2 discusses the fullness of the Holy Spirit in His power.

And so, here again this fullness of the Holy Spirit is mentioned. This time with reference to knowledge for judgment. The fullness of the Spirit in chapter 1 verse 4 was in relation to grace and peace. The fullness of the Spirit in chapter 4 verse 5 was the fullness of the Spirit in acting judgment. But here His fullness is the fullness of omniscience as He searches the earth for the criminals to be judged. So the Lamb comes forth, standing which means the Lamb is alive, bearing the wounds of its death, having ultimate power, complete omniscience by virtue of the fullness of the Holy Spirit sent out into all the earth to assess and to identify who is to receive the judgment.

It's quite an interesting note about the Holy Spirit, isn't it? Because when Jesus went away in John 14, 15 and 16, He said I'm going to send another comforter, didn't He? And I think we often assume that the Holy Spirit is nothing but a comforter, nothing but an encourager, nothing but a helper. Not so. First of all, in John 16 it tells us that He is a convicter. He will convict the world of sin. Now it tells us that He is really an executioner, that the Holy Spirit is going to be searching the world to identify the people to be destroyed, to assess the situation so that the Lamb can move out in judgment.

And then verse 7 says, and this is monumental, "And He came and He took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne." He is the Lamb. Here is the final monumental act in this heavenly scene. This is the thing that's been building since chapter 4 verse 1, since John arrived there in his vision. This is the great culminating act of human history. This is going to bring human history to its end. The goal of redemption is about to be reached. Paradise is about to be regained. Eden is about

to be restored. The Lamb comes and takes the scroll out of the hand of God.

This monumental moment is also described by Daniel in Daniel chapter 7 and verse 13. Daniel was having a vision. He said, "I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming and He came up to the Ancient of Days." Here He sees the second member of the trinity, one like the Son of Man coming up to God, the Ancient of Days, and He was presented before Him and to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom. Here is the same scenario. It just doesn't talk about the little scroll. But it says here comes the Son of Man, here comes the Lamb and He comes up to the throne of God and was given to Him dominion, glory and a kingdom. How extensive? That all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an ever lasting dominion which will not pass away and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. Daniel saw the same scenario minus the little scroll as the Lamb comes to take back the cursed universe.

That then brings us to the third element in this marvelous chapter. We have seen the search for the worthy One...we have seen the selection of the worthy One...verses 8 through the end of the chapter give us the song of the worthy One...the song of the worthy One.

The appearance of the Lamb as He moves to take the scroll, to redeem the universe and man causes praise to break out from everywhere, all over the universe. The praise begins to unfold in an escalating ascending crescendo of worship as the oratorio of redemption climaxes. In fact, in this scene all intelligent creation finally gets involved in the joyful praise. There were two majestic doxologies in chapter 4 and now there are three more added in chapter 5 to make a total of five great doxologies of praise to God and the Lamb because of the coming redemption. The paean of praise that begins to unfold here toward the Lamb rolls on, accumulating more momentum until the song of adoration is in the mouth of every living creature in the universe.

At least tonight we can see how the song begins. Verse 8, "And when He had taken the scroll," I mean, it's instantaneous, "the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb." The first thing is spontaneous worship. When He had taken the scroll...that is the monumental act that ignites the joy. Why? Because it means now it's going to happen, the end of sin, the end of Satan, what happened on the cross in terms of his sentence will now be executed. The glory of Christ will come, the Kingdom will come, Israel will be saved, the church will be honored and exalted. We will reign with Him, the curse will be reversed and all of that pent up anticipation that has been contained within the redeemed and the angels for millennia bursts out. And the four living ones who are the cherubim and the twenty-four elders who are the representatives of the redeemed church fall down before the Lamb.

It's kind of interesting because in chapter 4 it says the twenty-four elders fall down before the Lord who sits on the throne and will worship Him. They had been down once and now they're up and now they're down again. And interestingly enough and importantly, they ascribe the very same worship to Christ in chapter 5 that they gave to God in chapter 4. Don't let anybody suggest to you that Jesus Christ is not God. He is given the same worship in heaven as God is given. And it is worship only for God. In Revelation John fell down before an angel, and the angel said, "Get up, worship God." And if

they are worshiping Christ the Lamb here, then they are worshiping God for it is He alone that heaven adores and worships in this way.

After His resurrection, after having borne sin on the cross and accomplished redemption, Jesus Christ was exalted to the right hand of God. He received the glory He had before the world began. He received back the fullness of unveiled divine glory and majesty which was veiled during the incarnation. Paul says, "God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the age to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet and gave Him as head over all things," Ephesians 1:20 to 22. God exalted Him. And so, there He has been in an exalted position in glory. But now He begins to move, to begin His work of reigning in His universe.

And until this moment comes, the Lord is not fully glorified. He is not fully reigning and ruling. Back in Psalm 2 the promise came. "I have installed My King," verse 6, "upon Zion, My holy mountain. Ask of Me," He says, "and I will give You...that is My Son...the nations as Your inheritance and the ends of the earth as Your possession and You will break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware." God is saying there's going to be a day when I give My Son His throne. And then He warns, "Worship the Lord with reverence, rejoice with trembling, do homage to the Son lest He become angry and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled." You better be ready when My Son takes His rightful place. You better be ready when My Son steps out to rule and to judge.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse writing a number of years ago on Revelation said this, "There are four things out of place in the universe. The church is out of place, she ought to be in heaven. Israel is out of place, she should be in the land that has been sworn to her and possess every part of it. The devil is out of place, he ought to be in the lake of fire but he's still roaming free. And Christ is out of place, He should be through with intercession and seated on His throne, reigning instead of upon His Father's throne interceding."

So here in the vision we begin to see all of these things that are out of place being put in the rightful place. The church is in heaven. Israel is about to be given back her kingdom and her land and salvation. The devil, to be bound and cast into the lake of fire. And Christ is about to reign.

They knew this. They knew it. And so it says in verse 8, "That after He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb." And that initiates immense worship.

We're going to describe that worship next Sunday night. It is thrilling but you'll have to wait till then to enjoy it.

Father, we thank You again tonight for this hour we've spent in Your Word and we're so grateful, so grateful words fail us for this glimpse of future glory. Sometimes we wonder if anything is ever going to change. Sometimes we may be even drawn into the argument of the scoffers of whom Peter spoke when he said, "They say where is the sign of His coming, for all things continue as they were from the beginning." Sometimes it seems as though the heavens are never going to split with Your coming.

Sometimes it seems as though evil will always prosper. Sometimes it seems as if Christ will never get His due, His honor. Sometimes we wonder if He'll always be interceding and never reigning. And maybe we've wondered why so much is out of place. Why the church whose citizenship is in heaven has to be here. Why Israel who was promised a land doesn't have it. Why the devil who is a usurper is allowed to reign on the earth. And why Christ who is the King waits. But, Lord, we know the moment is coming and we will rejoice in anticipation of it even as all of heaven rejoices in that anticipation of the day in which You come, the day in which the Lamb takes the scroll and takes back the universe. To that end do we pray and say with John the Apostle, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Amen.

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