

The Throne Room Vision, Pt. 2

Revelation 5

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As Revelation 5 begins, the scene is in heaven and the time is yet future, at least at the time of the writing. John perceives with his mind a vision unfolding by the power of the spirit of God. Again he sees the throne and the One sitting on the throne and He has a book in His hand. The book has writing within and writing on the outside and seven seals holding it closed. The contents cannot be discovered until the seals are broken. Most interpreters make two assumptions concerning the book. The first assumption is that it is actually a scroll of papyri which would have been the kind of books produced in the first century. The second assumption is that the document represents some kind of legal document due to its seven seals. Truly they represent completeness as a symbolic number. However, legal documents in the Roman legal system used seven seals on the outside. Written on the seals were the names of those who had the authority to break the seals so the document could be opened. This particular application matches with a description of a last will and testament to be probated in a Roman court.

The scene in heaven continues with a pronouncement from a strong angel asking who is worthy to open the seals. This question was more rhetorical for emphasis purposes than anything else, but it raises an important point. Who is worthy to know and execute the will of God? The answer continues the mystery and it is that no one in heaven or under the earth has the authority to make such a determination. The affect on John is profound, it causes him to weep. So it should be in our day. When the will of God is not heard, nor can be heard, it should cause weeping. The central idea is with us even today, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ we can do nothing in the will of God. Knowing the will of God is absolutely centered in a relationship with Jesus Christ because He is the One who knows and reveals the will of the Father. Without the opening of this scroll, life has no meaning for anyone. Without divine purpose and intent from Creator God, man has less significance than a drop of water or a grain of sand on the beach.

Significance is also found in the words of the elder. They are in verse 5 and are a quote from Isaiah 11:1 with Jesus as from the root of David pictured as a lion. This lion has been victorious and won the right as an overcomer to open the book by breaking the seven seals. The next picture John gives is Jesus as a lamb. The first description is of His scars. They are the scars of torture and death on a Roman cross. The lamb is significant because it ties together the Passover meal from the Exodus account with a lamb to be sacrificed as the propitiation for sins and finally the connection continues to John the Baptist's proclamation that Jesus is the Lamb of God. The Baptist's mention of Jesus as the lamb is found in John's record of the life of Christ.

In addition to the scars, John notices the seven horns. These horns represent the power of Jesus Christ over all the earth and his ability to conquer. He is seen as one who over comes and

then one who sees with seven eyes which again refer to the seven spirits of God or His completeness. God is a sufficient King and creator regardless of what men think of Him. With seven eyes sent into all the earth, God's ability to see and discern all things is unimaginable to the human intellectual capacity. These eyes are seen as part of the lamb, Jesus Christ, and remind us that He sees into our hearts. It is Christ who is the worthy judge and who can better identify our motives than we can even identify about ourselves. While our mind can deceive us, He sees through it all. Such a wise and gracious king is the Lord Jesus.

At a kairos moment, that is a very specific moment in time, Jesus takes hold of the book. The taking of the book reminds us of the significance of the symbols of the previous verses. The Lion of Judah is none other than Christ. The lamb who was slain is the redeemer God and worthy of taking charge in the events yet to unfold. All of history is divided by the coming of Christ in humanity and history will again be changed and divided when he takes up the book and begins to execute the will of God in what we know as the times yet to come.

The picture in heaven when Jesus takes up the book, reminds of events on earth at the beginning of a new era. For instance, when a new president is inaugurated in the United States or when a church calls a new pastor, or some other company or organization gets new leadership. Whether the person has been elected or chosen through another selection process, his or her ideas, visions, and values have been carefully examined. There is agreement on those who decide that this person is the one to provide leadership. Usually there is much fan fare and celebration. Sometimes there are parades and parties along with much food and beverage. The residents in heaven react sharply to this taking up of the book. Something is about to happen that has never happened before. The restraints of the seasons are torn loose. The elders fall down at the feet of Jesus, they take up their harps to play a new song and they bring forward the prayers of the saints which the Bible calls incense. God is responding to the prayers of all the ages prayed in faith looking for His coming. We pray even so, "come Lord Jesus and it let it be".

In the previous chapter of Revelation, the Bible reveals worship in heaven of the creator. In chapter 5 the focus shifts to worship of the same God but a different characteristic. In addition to worship of Creator God is added worship of Redeemer God. The creation had fallen into sin yet God who created the earth had made provision and executed a plan for redemption. The cost of redemption was His own blood. That blood is sufficient to redeem all men regardless of tribe, tongue, people, or nation. Each of us will sing this song of praise to our God as we remember the people of our heritage and remember, it was not our heritage that brought our redemption but the blood of Christ. Citizenship of the United States does not bring special favor with God, but having been purchased by the blood of this special Lamb does. Not only is God recognized as the one who purchased the redeemed, but He is also praised because He made the redeemed something they were not. The redeemed now have the special place in the kingdom and a special function as that of priests. As priests, believers pray to God, initiate their own rites of worship and in the end, rule upon the earth. So is the song of the elders before the throne.

Angels, elders and myriads to thousands of living creatures get in the worship action through exalting the lamb. The song they sing emphasizes His worthiness to receive. Because of His action in redemption, Jesus is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing. There may be little agreement at times among God's people on earth, but at this moment in heaven, there will be perfect harmony. The one who has earned the right to serve as judge and jury over all creation is standing up. The perfection of his mercy and grace to all creation through redemption has exalted him to the place in heaven that no other name can occupy. This is true worship when every creature gathered at the throne is joyfully and exuberantly in total submission to the living God. There are no masks, no make believe, and no imposters. This is worship in its purest sense.

Finally, in verse 13, the third song is heard coming from the lips of all the creation. The Bible says every created thing gets in on this song. The rocks, the fish, the animals, the sand, the sea water, the birds of the sky, and yes even humans sing another song of submission. All creation with the exception of man has existed in total submission to God since the day of creation. It is a new thing for all of mankind to be in total submission and exuberantly singing the praises of the living God. This is no doubt the fulfillment of Philippians 2:10 which says at the name of Jesus "every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord".

When men praise something on earth they often stand to their feet. When all of creation sees the exalted glory of God in heaven it won't be on feet we stand but falling on our knees and maybe even our faces. This is a sign of total humility and submission. The four living creatures get in on the worship by falling down and proclaiming Amen. To all that has been spoken and proclaimed and sung by all of creation, they ring out that familiar word, let it be, it is so, Amen. As the words are spoken, again the elders fall down in worship of the living God.

Conclusions and Principles

1. Access to the Will of God is gained through a relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Worship includes total submission to the will of God. Worship can really only flow out of the heart of one who is in a relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. There is a compelling theme in this chapter for all of humanity to bow before God and give Him praise, honor, and authority in our lives.