

## Class 3 – A Door Open in Heaven Rev 4-5

### Outline of Rev 4-5

- John sees God on his throne receiving worship (4:1-11)
- John sees the Lamb/Lion pronounced worthy to open scroll, receiving worship (5:1-14)

### Overview of Rev 4-5

- This is the centering vision of Revelation: despite seeming chaos on earth, God still reigns
- John is brought into the throne room to receive a message from God and see Jesus advancing the plan of God for the world
- Major takeaway: Jesus has conquered (lion) by his death (lamb) and his people must be prepared to follow him in conquering through suffering.

### Key Lessons in Rev 4-5

- If Jesus conquers through suffering, we must be prepared to suffer in order to conquer too
- God is always on his throne, sovereign
- Only God and Jesus deserve worship
- Heaven is a place where things are as they should be (and our goal is to reflect that image on earth)
- Jesus has done what no man can do
- God responds to the prayers of his people
- God's will for all creatures is worship and submission to him

### God on His Throne (Rev 4)

- We have already been introduced to the idea of Jesus as reigning (Rev 3:21, 1:5) and the idea that his people share in his reign (3:21, 1:6, 2:26-27)
- Sometimes this is already happening (1:6) and sometimes future (2:26-27, 3:21). This fact underscores that we are not looking at a sequence of events but a description of present realities that will someday be brought to completion
- This text echoes many of the OT scenes where people have visions of God, particularly prophets who are commissioned (Isa 6, Ezek 1-2)
- It also strongly echoes Daniel's vision of the "son of man" receiving the kingdom from the "ancient of days" (Dan 7:9-14)
- 4:1 – John sees into heaven. The "first voice" (Jesus, 1:10, 13) has more to show John
- 4:2 – God's throne signifies his complete authority
- 4:4 – 24 elders are also on thrones. These seem to represent the people of God, who are promised to reign (1:6, 2:26-27, 3:21, etc) and given white robes (3:5, 6:11, 7:9, etc)
- This could be the people of God in Old and New Testaments (12 tribes and 12 apostles)

- 4:5-6 – God’s presence exudes power and fire, as in Sinai and OT throne scenes (Dan 7:9-10, Ezek 1:27, Isa 6:4, 6)
- Sea of glass may be similar to the crystal expanse at foot of throne (Ezek 1:22)
- 4:6-8 – The four living creatures are extremely similar to the cherubim in Ezekiel (Ezek 1, 10:1, 15) and somewhat similar to the seraphim in Isaiah 6:2-3
- Many commentators think the creatures represent all of creation, but it is possible that they are simply angelic beings
- The living creatures worship God as holy, holy, holy
- “The worship of God is the heartbeat of the cosmos, even when we humans on earth do not see it, participate in it, or value it” (Gorman)
- They also prompt worship from the 24 elders (4:9-11)
- God is repeatedly described as the one who “lives forever and ever” (v. 9, 10)
- The elders cast their crowns before the throne, deferring their authority to God (v. 10)
- 4:11 – God’s worthiness is proven by his creation and sustaining of the world
- Domitian was also addressed as “our lord and god”

#### The Lion/Lamb and the Scroll (Rev 5)

- 5:1-2 – God holds a sealed scroll (see Dan 12:4, 9). Someone “worthy” must open it and break the seals
- The scroll represents God’s plan of judgment and redemption. Who will move the plan forward?
- 5:3-4 – A search is made and no one is found worthy to open the scroll and its seals. John weeps
- 5:5 – One of the elders tells John not to weep because the Lion of Judah has conquered and can open the scroll
- Jesus is described as the Lion of Judah (Gen 49:9-10) and Root of David (Isa 11:1, 10)
- John hears about the Lion, but turns and sees a Lamb
- 5:6 – The Lamb is standing, slain. He has conquered but has been killed
- Jesus fulfills the messianic prophecies in unexpected ways – suffering but triumphing
- “The shock of this reversal discloses the central mystery of the Apocalypse: God overcomes the world not through a show of force but through the suffering and death of Jesus, the faithful witness/martyr” (Richard Hays)
- He has seven horns (power) and seven eyes (the Spirit)
- 5:7 – The Lamb receives the scroll from God
- 5:8 – The living creatures and elders worship the lamb, holding harps and incense (representing the prayers of the saints)
- The action in Revelation is prompted by the requests of the saints for vengeance and help (v. 8, 6:9-11, 8:3-5)
- 5:9-10 – They sing a new song – a song of new deliverance
- This song is directed at the Lamb as worthy because he has conquered through his death (v. 9) and has taken a people and made them into a kingdom (v. 10)
- 5:11-12 – Myriads of myriads here sounds like Dan 7:10 – all the heavenly host
- 5:13 – The vision expands outward so that every creature worships God and the Lamb

- This represents God's will for the world – and perhaps the ultimate fate of all the world (Phil 2:9-11, Rom 14:10-12)
- What is coming next – the opening of the seals – will be a part of God's plan to judge and redeem the world, demonstrating his power and responding to the cries of his persecuted people