

The Lamb has Triumphed!

Call to Worship: Psalm 96

Hymn #109- *This is My Father's World*

1st Scripture: Daniel 7

Hymn #219- *Blessing and Honor and Glory and Power*

2nd Scripture: Revelation 5

Hymn Insert- *His Robes for Mine*

Doxology #42 (supp)- *Worthy is the Lamb*

Introduction:

Following the vision of the exalted, reigning Christ and His letters to the seven churches, we saw last time that John was once again carried away in the Spirit; this time into a door that opened into God's heavenly court. And here, John would be taken over a significant bridge, which would transition him from "the things that are," into visions that speak of "the things which will take place after this" (see Rev. 1:19 & 4:1).

And this vision of God's heavenly court would arm John (and the churches) with the most critical pieces of armor and weaponry, necessary for overcoming, in the context of all that "must take place after this." Last time, we saw that the beginning of this vision, containing every living creature, surrounding the throne of God and all of His glory, is meant to constantly remind us of the universal sovereignty of God, especially as it relates to His pure holiness (He must right every wrong; He will fulfill all His holy will) and His position as divine Creator (He can right every wrong; He can fulfill all His holy will). He is forever praised by the four living creatures (who honor, guard and proclaim His holiness) and the twenty four elders (who proclaim the worthiness of God to receive all glory, honor and power because everything that exists was created by His might and continues to exist by His power).

As we move into chapter five now, which really is a continuation of the same vision (remember there are no set chapter divisions in the original Greek), we will find that the drama of this vision intensifies greatly. And we will also find a third critical piece of armor that we must put on, if we are to overcome and endure all that we will face in the context of the things that, "must take place after this" (revealed in chapters 6 and following).

To this end then, let us consider the following two things this morning:

- 1) Again, we will simply examine the drama that unfolds in the remainder of the vision
- 2) We will consider the meaning of this dramatic event and how it is meant to motivate us to overcome

I. The drama that unfolds in the remainder of the vision

Just as John is beginning to absorb a bit of the greatness and glory of the vision, he suddenly finds himself directed to the right hand of God, where a scroll rests. And this scroll is full and complete, written on the inside and on the back, and sealed with seven seals. We are told in verse 1, “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.” The scroll is full and complete, but it is sealed and can only be opened by one who is worthy to open it.

And so, with as sense of eager anticipation, recognizing the critical importance of the content of this scroll, John looks to see if the scroll will be opened. And then we are told in verse 2, “Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”” This strong angel is recognized not so much for having some kind of a muscular or large build, but rather, for having a voice that is powerful enough to reach the ears of every living creature, as it were. His voice carries outward into every concentric circle, so that one can be sought to open the scroll among every living thing. And perhaps waiting to hear some form of shuffling or the sound of someone (anyone) coming forward who could loose the seals, John looks around and we are told in verse 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.” The four living creatures, as glorious as they were, were incapable of opening the scroll. They had not the right or the authority to do so. The twenty four elders and the myriads upon myriads of angels could stand watching, but none; not one of them was capable of opening that scroll. None in heaven were worthy. And all the way back to the last concentric circle, not a single living thing on or under the earth could possibly open that scroll. It is not that everyone in the vision didn’t know about

it. The strong angel, proclaimed it loud and clear for all to hear, but none had the authority; none were worthy to view its contents and to enact it.

And so, John, understanding the severity of the matter; recognizing that whatever was in that scroll was important enough to lead him to his appointed task in receiving and delivering the remainder of the revelation; knowing that God's completed plan of redemption on behalf of His saints; the very protection and security of His people, hinged to the loosening, unfolding and enacting of that scroll, John begins to weep profusely with a sense of hopelessness. Notice in verse 4, John states, "So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it." For a short time, John was able to appreciate what life would have been like without the hope of the Gospel. Nothing else mattered! The riches of the world, every temporal joy bound to this dying and decaying globe full of dying and decaying people...it is all useless, vain, empty...a mirage, if there be no Gospel hope in Christ! If there is no plan of redemption enacted and set to completion by God, then this world is but a foretaste of the torments of hell for the believer. Imagine brethren, if suddenly, you were to be convinced that all of this; that all of our Christianity, which we have based our hope upon, because we know that the world is a vain and empty place apart from its Creator, were for naught. Our hearts would shatter and our souls would collapse and we would all weep miserably. Oh, what a benefit John had in those moments of weeping, and you can bet that what he saw next, set his zeal for the Gospel into a blazing fire! Sometimes you don't appreciate what you have until you face the threat of losing it. Oh brethren, sit there with John for a few moments, and throw away every hope and promise in Christ, how do you view the world now? Is it really that important? Now prepare to consider all that follows in the vision, and ask yourself, "What is it that drives your life? What really matters?"

One of John's own companions; one of the twenty four elders now speaks to John and points him in the direction of something he had failed to see as he was lost in his tears. In verse 5, we read perhaps the most powerful and encouraging words in the entire Book of Revelation, "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.'" Wow! Talk about being moved from the lowest possible low to the highest possible high, all in the matter of a few moments! "John, don't cry! Don't sink into a pit of hopeless despair! Look! Look! Look over

there! The almighty, all powerful Lion of the tribe of Judah; the Messiah, who came from the line of Judah, who is the root of David, He has prevailed! He is able to open the scroll and to loose its seals, and He comes forward to do so! There is indeed One, mighty to save! There is indeed One who is worthy to open that scroll! There is One who has conquered and prevailed such that the people of God have a never ending, never failing hope at all times! Look, see the Lion of the tribe of Judah!”

And as John looks in the direction to which the elder is pointing, he sees the Lion of Judah. Only, the Lion of Judah is not presented as a *Lion* to the eyes of John. Rather, He is presented in another form, indicating that though this One prevailed as a Lion; the way in which He prevailed and overcame, forces another description with respect to His actual appearance in the vision. In verse 6, John continues, “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.” John sees a Lamb! John beholds the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!” The all powerful (seven-horned), all knowing (seven eyed) Lion prevailed and overcame as a Lamb! And how could this be? How was He worthy to take the scroll from the right hand of God, when no one else could do so? Well, the vision tells it all, doesn’t it! He is the Lamb *who was slain!* By virtue of His own humility, righteous living and death, Christ became the Paschal (Passover) Lamb, whose blood was smeared over the doorposts of His people’s hearts, so that they could be free from the power and penalty of their sins, finding reconciliation with God, eternal life, and the guarantee of overcoming any and all opposition, in Christ! The resurrected atonement; the resurrected sacrificial Lamb of God alone could bring unholy sinners into a loving relationship with their holy God! He alone could open the scroll that secured the destiny; that enacted and completed the entire divine plan of redemption, whereby undeserving, immortal, defiled sinners could merge into a sincere, loving familial relationship with the living God! He alone could take what is unjust, and join them to Himself (by faith) so that they would be made just and thereby find acceptance with God! He alone secures the unfolding and guarantee of Revelation 6 through 22, where the enemies of God are entirely defeated and the children of God (the saints) are eternally secured and set to receive the kingdom forever! No one else in heaven or on earth or under the earth or anywhere; no other living being could possibly do this. Only the incarnate Son of God, who became a man, who

lived a righteous life as a man, who died a sacrificial death as a man, and who was raised from the dead as a man, was worthy to open the scroll.

And so, John moves on to say in verse 7, “Then He [the Lamb; the Lord Jesus Christ] came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.” Being alone worthy, He took the scroll out of the hand of God’s power, and in doing so, He would prepare to loosen its seals and to enact all that was written within it; the full and completed testament of God’s plan of redemption; the inheritance of the saints, who triumph to the end in Christ!

And as we would probably expect, the scene that became silent for a short while, now blows up in orderly, universal praise toward this Lamb, and then toward God and the Lamb! The living creatures and the twenty four elders fall down in worship, the multiple thousands upon thousands of angels follow suit, and every living creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth, follow up with praise directed toward both the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb. And the universal praise is sealed by the “Amen” of the living creatures (who guard and proclaim the holiness of God continually), and the falling down of the elders, who worship “Him who lives forever and ever!” And this glorious vision of throne focused, God centered worship, then bridges into the “things which must take place after this,” as the Lamb begins to break the seals of the scroll in chapter 6.

II. The meaning of this dramatic event and how it is meant to motivate us to overcome

Brethren, having considered the glorious atonement of Christ and how it has secured the complete redemption of His people, I want to emphasize something that I have just touched upon, a bit more, in accordance with the meaning of this vision. As we have seen last time, the meaning of each portion of this vision is found in the songs of praise given after each respective description of the vision. In verses 8-14, and especially in verses 8-10, we find the meaning of what has just happened in this drama. Having spent much time talking about the key redemptive aspect of Christ’s victory seen in the vision, and how that secures the unfolding of God’s plan for His people, I want to bring our attention to the necessary and sobering product of this victory as described both in the first song and in Daniel 7. [Read verses 8-14 of chapter 5]

Again, as the scene is described for us, the caption which is meant to accompany and explain that scene in full detail is found in the songs of praise, and especially in verses 9 & 10. There, in response to the Lamb coming forward to take the scroll out of the hand of God, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders proclaim the worthiness of Christ to take that scroll and to open its seals. And then, again (even as we had seen in the middle of chapter 4:11) we come to that critical word, “For,” in the middle of verse 9 (here in chapter 5), which is going to explain to us *why* the Lamb was able to open this scroll, leading to *the end that was accomplished* by this glorious act. We have already spoken about the remainder of verse 9, “For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...” Here is the confirmation that Christ’s accomplishing of eternal salvation and the redemption of His people from all nations, by the shedding of His own blood, is the determining factor for *why* He is able to take and open the scroll. And I have already talked about how this scroll contains the unfolding and completion of God’s will (in full), which we will begin to see in chapters 6 and following, as Christ starts to loose the seals, leading ultimately to the opening of the scroll and the revealing of its contents in full. And all of this is symbolic of God’s “will” being carried forth and enacted to the end. But notice as well in this song that we are given the glorious outcome of Christ’s triumph; we are told of something contextually very significant regarding what this vision entails.

In verse 10, we read, “And have made us [them—the redeemed] kings and priests [for a kingdom and priests] to our God; and we [they] shall reign on the earth.” Notice how this falls right in line with the parallel text in Daniel 7:16-27. Following the revelation of the fourth beast in Daniel, who will prosper over God’s people for a time (persecuting and killing them...etc), we are told in verses 26-27, “But the court shall be seated, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it forever. Then the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His Kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him.”

You see, brethren, the glory of this vision in Revelation 5; the great contributing, motivating factor of this vision, which we are meant to ponder continually (daily) is that though the truly faithful in this world may and will suffer many things at the hands of our opposition, none of those things can ultimately defeat us. For God is holy and He is the Creator of all things

(chapter 4), and furthermore, because of what Christ has accomplished in our redemption, the kingdom of God; the only Kingdom to ultimately stand and exist eternally, will be delivered over to Christ and His saints (chapter 5). All that is written in that scroll secures and pours into this reality. The Kingdom of God; the Kingdom given over to us unworthy and yet, redeemed sinners, must meet its final consummation in accordance with every fine detail recorded in this scroll (the remainder of the Revelation), because Christ has secured and enacted it through His own death and resurrection. It must come to pass. What needed to be done to secure it, has been done already, in time and space, in Christ!

And so, *even now*, even in our weakness and even in our undergoing persecution or any manner of opposition, we reign on the earth, because we reign with Christ, and our end is totally secured. And any “bad” that happens to us from the world’s standpoint, is only used for good; it is only used in the outworking of God’s good plan on behalf of and in us, in accordance with all that is written in the scroll, which is thorough and complete. In other words, brethren, we look to the mighty Lion of the Tribe of Judah; we look to the firstborn from the dead as our primary example of overcoming, even as we look to Him as our Lord and Savior. And this Lion, overcame, He conquered...as a sacrificial Lamb. He conquered by and in His own suffering and death. And we likewise, not in an atoning sense, conquer by means of our suffering and our death, as we stand firm, bearing witness to Christ and His Gospel to the end. Those who suffer with Him, will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12)! We conquer as Lions, because we overcome as lambs!

And so, in bringing this all together, here is the vital motivation of these two chapters, brethren, which we must carry with us for the remainder of the Revelation as we study *and live through* it. We must ever keep our minds and hearts fixed on what we know *always to be true* in the light of what *seems to be* in our immediate circumstances. And how do we do this? By faith, we look into the door of heaven with John, and we behold our holy, eternal Creator at the center of all things (ensuring that no single injustice will remain unrecompensed, and that He, who created all things has total sovereign power over all things), and we look to the Lamb that was slain (as our constant fountain of grace, as our constant acceptance with God, and as our sure and solid hope of bringing us into His eternal kingdom, where we will reign with Him)! Christ wins and so do we! Push forward for His glory! Invest your very lives, which are secured in Christ,

in the service of His kingdom now! Live entirely for His glory now, proclaim His praises and exalt His kingdom now in the midst of a world and a kingdom that has its foundations in dust, and will soon return to dust! And when the opposition comes and is fierce, look back up to the heavenly court and see your God, and see your Christ, and see your guaranteed end, and press on!

Christ is worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength...so let's strive to honor, glorify and bless Him with our lips and with our lives at all times.

“Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!” The old song...“God is holy and God has created,” and the new song, “In Christ, God has redeemed sinners” ought to be the songs of our hearts, brethren! Who is God? He is a glorious, holy, eternal Being! What has He done? He has created us! And He has redeemed us in Christ! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him...at all times!

And lastly, brethren, notice one other thing, which is very relevant in the vision, and which we will see elaborated on further, in the Revelation... [Read verse 8]

Isn't it a wonderful thing to see God reminding us here of the precious and valuable prayers of His saints. They are carried before God in golden bowls, as it were. And brethren, the reason that this is inserted in the vision, and this will be confirmed in other portions of the Book (as early as in chapter 6), is that God would have us know that it is by means of the prayers of His people, that His will unfolds. Yes, somehow, in God's glorious design, as Spurgeon said, “Prayer forms some of the necessary cogs in the wheels of God's providence.” And just when you think that our prayers mean so little, here we see that they reach God and are used by God, especially in the advancing of His kingdom through His church. Is that not motivation for us to strive to be here on Wednesday evenings, if possible? Prayer does indeed serve to help unfold the success of Christ's kingdom, and while we cannot see those golden bowls firsthand; while we cannot *feel* that they exist, this vision is meant to appeal to our faith even in this regard, so that we will know for certain that our prayers in the battle and for the success of the Gospel and the church of our living God, are indeed made effectual in Christ. They reach the throne; they reach God, because of the Lamb that was slain. Oh, that we would hold, treasure and apply this wonderful nugget of truth, deep in the recesses of our hearts. For then, rather than making so

many excuses for not being here, we would do all that we could to be here to pray with the brethren!

The Gospel

Let me close by asking you this morning, is Christ your Lord and Savior in truth? Are you in Christ? Have you seen yourself as a helplessly lost sinner, in desperate need of the salvation that Christ offers? You see, the vision is clear, isn't it? There is no one else in heaven or on earth, who can bring you to your holy God. None are worthy! Christ alone is the sacrifice who died for sinners; who paid the price for a debt that you could never satisfy. You are in debt to God. You belong to Him, and you have not lived according to His design and His standard. Put your life up to the Ten Commandments and see how far you fall short. And then turn and fall on your knees before Christ, repenting of your sins, and trusting wholly and completely in Him to save and deliver you from the power and penalty of your sins! For then, and only then, can you be sure that you will stand in the only kingdom that will stand, when this world comes to its end. Don't sink your heels into the soil of a world that is spiraling right down into hell. The destiny of this world and all who are not in Christ is already sealed. Be among the children of God. Repent and believe the Gospel and be saved...before it is too late! "For whoever will call upon the Name of the Lord, will be saved!" (Rom. 10:13)

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25