

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
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## *The Cross, Judgment, and The Kingdom* **Revelation 5**

**Keywords:** Revelation, prophecy, End Times, Judgment, Kingdom of God, Cross

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** None

**SermonAudio Blurb:** We often think of the Cross and the death of Christ with atonement and forgiveness of sin. But how often do you consider that His death and resurrection is also the means to make Him worthy to bring for the judgments of God and usher in His Kingdom? In this chapter we will see exactly that.

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We enter in to the prophetic section of the book of Revelation.
  - 1. Prophecy occupies one fifth of Scripture. And of that one fifth, one third of that focuses on the second coming.
  - 2. This is one of the reasons I decided to work through Revelation.
    - a. One out of 25 verses in the bible refer to the return, or second coming, of Jesus Christ. That works out to more than 1,500 verses.
    - b. Interestingly, the ratio is 2 - 1 for every time the bible mentions the second coming as compared to the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross.
  - 3. Jesus made much of His return and a key message of the whole New Testament is for the Church to be ready for His return.
  - 4. Yet today this doctrine is downplayed as being too divisive or complex or distracting.
  - 5. My pastor once said, “. . . Jesus is coming. The promise of God demands it. The words of Jesus demand. The guarantee of the Holy Spirit demands it. The plan for the church demands it. The plan for Israel demands it. The plan for the nations demands it. The humiliation of Christ demands. The exaltation of Satan demands it. And the expectation of the saints demands it.”
- B. Last week we had the privilege of getting a glimpse into heaven and the very throne room where God dwells.

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1. Two things stood out in the vision:
  - a. The utter transcendence of God.
  - b. The absolute desire to worship God and God alone.
2. This gives us the perfect picture of what is wrong in this age.
  - a. Why is worship so hard for us? Why must Christians be reminded and commanded to be thankful to God? It is the age we live in
  - b. When we allow this age of sin and death to define us we forget to look to God for the relief and help. We settle for things that are already to us from God that they are passing away.
  - c. And those who do not worship Jesus Christ are in an even worse situation:

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them” (Romans 1:18-32)

- C. Remember, chapter 4 sets the stage for chapter 5. So, in light of the glory of God and the propriety of true worship as seen in heaven we now move on in this vision.

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**II. The text:**

- A. The book/scroll (1).
  - 1. We come back again to the throne. Who is upon it?
    - a. The Father.
    - b. Who has just been described in chapter 4.
  - 2. Background on scrolls.
    - a. Were made from papyrus.
    - b. Strips were laid down vertically and horizontally like a laminate. Glued together to form a sheet.
    - c. Each sheet would be sewed to other sheets until the entire scroll was completed, about 34 feet long.
    - d. The result was that there was only one usable side to write. The outside was the vertical strips, which would make your quill jump.
    - e. Very seldom was both sides written on. One of two reasons to do so:
      - (1) You were too poor to buy another scroll.
      - (2) You don't want multiple scrolls. You want it all together.
    - f. Which of those fits best in our passage? The second one.
      - (1) It is a way of saying "this is the fulness of what is being disclosed."
      - (2) We will find this to be true as we go through the rest of the book.
      - (3) This is a full disclosure of God's purposes for both judgment and blessing for all of creation.
      - (4) Again, in anticipation to what is coming I reckon this to be a bit like a massive roller coaster that is climbing up that first incline. Anticipation is building and the top is in sight.
    - g. Then the scroll would be sealed with wax seals—seven in number.
      - (1) The number signifies completeness. Here there is something worth noting. The number seven is both literal and symbolic.

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(2) What is key here is that in that day, until the seal was broken, whatever was stipulated in the scroll did not have the ability to be carried out. This is important to note.

## B. The mighty angel (2).

1. Again we have a glimpse into the angelic world. Apparently they not only vary in appearance and purposes but also in strength. Then emphasis here is upon his strength, yet he cannot open the seal.
2. Seeks one who is worthy to break the seals and there is one in all of universe.
3. It is here that chapter 4 comes into play.
  - a. The God who is so far removed from us due to our fallenness.
  - b. The God who even the greatest and highest orders of angels are compelled to fall and worship.
  - c. The God who simply is so glorious that He can only be described in the most unique of language.
  - d. Who can approach Him? Who can take that scroll? Who can open the seals so as to bring about God's purposes?

## C. John begins to weep. Why?

1. If no one is worthy, then God's purposes for redemption, renewal, and justice will not come to pass.
2. The gospel will have meant nothing.
3. All the wrongs will never be made right. No hope. All our suffering is just futility.
4. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15 means something different—we really do need to just eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow we die and that is it.
5. It speaks again to the reality of what the gospel is truly saying.
  - a. The gospel is that God was faithful to his promises.
  - b. Through Jesus Christ He has defeated our great enemies.
  - c. And the kingdom of God is dawning, but we look to the day when it will be fully revealed.

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- d. But if there is no one to open the scroll, then this shall never take place. And he is shattered.
- 6. Let this sink in for a moment for it is the utter opposite of our generation.
  - a. In this nation the sense of justice or right and wrong is at best skewed and at worse non-existent.
  - b. “Who are we to decide what is right?”
  - c. For us, moral relativism would make us not weep. This is just life.
- D. The correction (5).
  - 1. The imagery here is simple and straight-forward. “Behold!” The lion of Judah is the king, the Davidic son
  - 2. He looks to see the lion and sees what?
    - a. A lamb. Not two animals, this is the mixing of metaphors that we talked about last week.
    - b. The lion is the lamb. This picks up the imagery of the sacrifice that was Jesus.
    - c. But notice also the horns and eyes.
      - (1) Seven again means perfection or completion.
      - (2) Horn means what? Kingship. Eyes means what? Knowledge.
      - (3) When you put this together you get that this lion, who is a slain lamb is also the fulness of authority and knowledge.
  - d. Vs 6 is best translated like the NIV does it, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne.”
    - (1) This is again why chapter 4 was so important. Even the greatest of the angels could not approach the throne of God.
    - (2) But here the lion/lamb is in the midst, the center of that throne.
    - (3) He is God!

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- (4) From this point on, almost every time God is mentioned, or the throne, the Lamb is mentioned as well. And what follows through the rest of Revelation is a description of the triumph of the Lamb.

## E. The worship and praise.

1. The Lamb is introduced and the immediate reaction of all in heaven is what?
  - a. Worship and again we have to go back to chapter 4 and see how powerful this image truly is.
  - b. Only God, in his throne room, is worshiped.
  - c. Notice how seamlessly the worship directed to the Father is now directed to the Son.
    - (1) This is consistent throughout the New Testament and is part of the way the doctrine of the Trinity was developed.
    - (2) Very important to note this and remember this.
2. Harp is a symbol of joy.
  - a. The picture is clear, there is great joy and singing in the presence of the Lamb. The question is why?
  - b. Psalm 137:1-4 By the rivers of Babylon, There we sat down and wept, When we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it We hung our harps. For there our captors demanded of us songs, And our tormentors mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How can we sing the LORD's song In a foreign land?
    - (1) Because God's purposes shall be accomplished.
    - (2) Justice and love shall conquer sin and death.
    - (3) The adversary is to be destroyed.
3. Bowls of incense which are prayers (8d).
  - a. This is another Old Testament symbol. In the temple worship they had bowls of incense that were to signify the prayers they were actually offering. The billowing smoke were not the prayers, but a symbol of what actually was happening in prayer.

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- b. Psalm 141:1-2 O Lord, I call upon Thee; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to Thee! 2 May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering.
  - c. Incense carries the idea of pleasantness. David, in the psalm, is saying that he desires his prayers to be pleasant to the Lord.
  - d. And in chapter 5 we find that, in fact, it is worth praying. They are not wasted as we pour out our burdens upon our Lord. There is one who is worthy to open the seals.
- F. The song of redemption.
- 1. What is the basis of His right to open the scroll? It is His Cross work.
  - 2. In other words, it is not His deity, it is his death and resurrection. Without it, God's purposes would not have been accomplished.

### **III. The Core Message of Chapter .**

- A. A key aspect to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- 1. We see in the work and person of Jesus wonderful and pleasant/soul-strengthening truths.
    - a. We are redeemed from slavery to sin.
    - b. We are made alive when once we were dead in sin.
    - c. We are transferred out of this kingdom/realm marked by darkness and death to Jesus' kingdom, marked by light and life.
    - d. We measure the vastness of the Father's love toward us by Christ's sacrifice on our behalf.
    - e. We no longer face any of God's wrath or condemnation.
    - f. We are now declared to be righteous in the fullest.
    - g. We are adopted into the very family of God.
    - h. We are given a clean conscience.
  - 2. But we often don't see that His Cross-work was the means to make Him worthy to break these seals.

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- a. Seals that will unleash the wrath of God upon all who are unredeemed.
- b. Seals that will loosen the leash on Satan and his minions to show themselves to be murderers and liars in the highest degree.
- c. Seals that will result in death and suffering of the likes never seen—and this world has seen much.
- d. In other words, the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross and in His resurrection also is the basis for God’s righteous judgment being passed upon all who reject Jesus.

## IV. Conclusion.

- A. Three other aspects to the atoning work of our Lord.
  1. It is a *broad atonement* in that there is not a tribe, nation, or people left out. No racism. All are image bearers.
    - a. Oh that the church would reflect this now!
    - b. We too often lag behind on social justice.
  2. It is a *directed atonement*.
    - a. Not just saved from sin.
    - b. They were purchased for God.
    - c. “You were bought with a price, therefore, glorify God with your body.”
  3. It is a *triumphal atonement*.
    - a. Vs 10.
    - b. We shall reign on earth. This speaks of God’s uncontested kingdom.
    - c. Right now we are this, but it is not realized.
    - d. Yet in our prayers we are interceding on the behalf of others. We function in the priestly work of mediation with the world.
      - (1) Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.



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- (2) Romans 15:15-16.
- (3) And in eternity we will be the priests who praise God.
- e. Verse 12. Seven things the Lamb was to receive. In other words, the fulness of all praise and glory and honor.
- 4. And finally, every created thing shouts out in praise to the Creator.
  - a. Remember that the whole of creation groans for that day of redemption.
  - b. The created realm glories at its very core that the redeemer lives!
- B. How comfortable we become in a world of sin and justice.
  - 1. The weeping of John stands out to me.
  - 2. When was the last time you wept over the sheer brokenness of this world? When did your heart last be filled with an ache for all things to be made right.
  - 3. How often do you long for God to bring justice and righteousness to this creation?

## V. **Benediction/Doxology.**

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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## Small Group Questions

- **Summer Break**