

The Conquering Lamb

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Date: 01 May 2022

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[0:00] And we will be seeing, really, still, the implications of the resurrection of our Lord in the Revelation passage in Revelation 5 this morning.

! But before we do that, let us pray. O Lord, we praise you and acclaim you as creator and ruler over all things. You are enthroned in majesty, and with heaven we cry.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come. But you are not only worthy, O God, to receive glory and honor and power by reason of being creator.

We adore and bless your name, that as our Redeemer, you, O Christ, reigns and rule, having conquered all things. Including us, who make up your church.

And you welcome us into your kingdom. Yours is the majesty and glory and honor. Holy Spirit, help us to see Christ today. Even now, with our limited sight.

[1:11] Help us to see him in all his worthiness. Transport us to see what Jesus will have us see in this vision of Apostle John. And in seeing it, may we be emboldened to commit ourselves to you and to your everlasting reign.

We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator and advocate. Amen. Turn with me to Revelation 5.

It's on page 1221 in your pew Bible. Do you know when you're reading a wonderful book?

For example, one of my favorite books is, one of my favorite authors is J.R.R. Tolkien and his Unimpeachable Lord of the Rings trilogy. Now when you're reading a book like that, a grand book like that, you can't help but be transported into the world the author has created.

A good author will paint pictures with his words. And if the book is engaging, you are transported out of your room and out of the chair that you're sitting in into the author's world.

[2:28] I think Revelation is such a book. Especially chapter 4 and 5. But unlike Tolkien, Christ himself is the one who is painting the picture for us.

John is merely serving as a scribe or recorder of the things he is being shown. But he is a faithful scribe. And it would be helpful for us today as we examine this passage.

It would be helpful for us to be in the place of John. To see as he sees this wondrous sight of the heavenly throne room.

In that vein, we should read, and this is not only for this chapter, but as we read all of Revelation, we should read the book of Revelation as a picture book rather than a puzzle book.

We should read it as a picture book rather than a puzzle book. It doesn't serve us to read the book of Revelation with a news magazine in hand to try to decipher it.

[3:34] I think that's often how many people read the book of Revelation. But it defeats the purpose for which it was written for us when we do that. The purpose for which the book is written is for the church to encourage the saints to put their trust in their risen Lord.

Now let's look this morning at our text in Revelation chapter 5. We see here that John has been taken in his vision to the center of the universe.

I don't mean that geographically, but I mean really the center of the universe. To the throne room of heaven. And he beholds before him the resplendent majesty of the throne room.

With God himself seated in power and authority. That's in chapter 4. But he sees, he sees there, the picture of God seated on the throne.

Showing that he is worthy. That is, God is worthy to receive praise and worship. Because all things exist through him.

[4:45] And duly holds him worship. That's what we see in chapter 4. In chapter 5 now, it's still in the same heavenly throne room. But chapter 5 focuses on Jesus, the God-man.

Also worthy of worship. But not just because he's creator and sustainer of the universe. But uniquely because through him, salvation and redemption is given to the elect. From every tribe and language and people and nation. That's what we're told. Chapter 5 continues in the throne room. It's almost as if the beginning of the chapter hones in on this scroll. That is in the hand of God. Observe the description of the scroll. It was written within and on the back.

And it was sealed with seven seals, we're told. This is the scroll of the divine decree of God. And if you continue to read the book of Revelation, you will find that the contents of the scroll is unrolled to us as we read along.

[5:58] But first, we have the problem of finding someone who can carry out God's ultimate plan of judgment and salvation that is contained in the pages of the scroll.

The angel cries out in verse 2, Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And they looked.

They looked for one who's worthy. They looked in heaven. They looked on the earth. And even under the earth. Presumably among those who have died. Among the Old Testament saints, perhaps.

Noah, was he worthy? Abraham, maybe Moses. David, surely. Maybe Isaiah. Maybe Elijah or Elisha.

They looked among the New Testament saints. Peter, James. Anyone living that is worthy? They looked in heaven. Maybe one of the angels, the archangels.

[7:02] Gabriel, Michael. No one. No one in all of history. And in all of creation. Is worthy to step forward.

To take the scroll. No one was found worthy. To carry out the plan and purposes of God. To its ultimate end. Ultimately.

Only God himself. Can carry out his own purposes. No mere created being. Could take it on. But they find no one.

And John. Look at John's reaction. John rightly. He rightly understands. The meaning of not being able to find the worthy person. To take the scroll. And he weeps.

The description is that. Of a wailing. He said. He weeps loudly. It was a wailing sob. And cry out of despair. Because John knows.

[8:00] John knows there's a need for a mediator. He knows there's a need for an advocate. There can be no peace. With God. Without someone. Who will step forward.

To do the work of reconciliation. John knows this. So he weeps. I must confess to you. That this reaction of John. Convicts me.

How often are we moved. To weep. Over those who are lost. We know there is a mediator. Jesus Christ. We know who he is.

But do we mourn. Over the many around us. Who haven't earned. And haven't received. This great salvation. John recognized the implications.

Of not being able to find someone who is worthy. John knows that his gospel. His whole life. Will be meaningless. John agrees with Paul.

[9:01] In saying that. There is no meaning to the gospel. Without the resurrection. And the accomplishment. The triumph of Jesus. On the cross. And his vindication of the resurrection.

He knows the implication of it. So he weeps. He mourns. Or that we will be moved in our spirits. And yearn. Like John does. Like the apostles does. In the pages of scriptures.

That we will yearn. That our neighbors. And our co-workers. Will come to know God. Who is worthy. To save them. To the uttermost. But we see.

In this text. That mercifully. John was not left. In despair. Verse 5 tells us. That one of the elders. Said to John. Weep no more.

See. Behold. The lion. Of the tribe of Judah. The root of David. As conquered. So that he can open the scroll.

[9:57] And its seven seals. Look. There are two messianic titles. Given. To this person. Who is worthy. Who has conquered. And who is worthy.

To open. The scroll. The scrolls. And its seven seals. The first is that he is the lion. Of the tribe of Judah. That is. An allusion to the Old Testament.

Genesis 49. When Jacob was blessing. His sons. And he says of Judah. The. The. The. The. Judah is the lion's well. And the scepter.

Will not. Will not leave. Judah's. The messianic king. That is. Of God. Perish. Bears this title. Of the lion.

Of the tribe of Judah. And we see in Isaiah 11. The. The. The. The root of David. The offspring of David. Who is the messianic king.

[10 : 52] So. We recognize. That this person. Right off the bat. That this person. Is the messiah. He bears the messianic title. We are told.

That he is conquered. And because he is conquered. He can open the book. He is overcome. But how did he overcome? Through his death.

And resurrection. He overcomes the devil. And he now possesses. The authority. To carry out. The divine plan. Of salvation. Jesus.

Conquered. Through faithful suffering. Now. Notice here. That he heard. If you were John. If you were John.

Upon hearing. The lion. Of the tribe of Judah. The root of David. You might have expected. A warrior. To come forth.

[11 : 47] Covered in the blood. Of his enemies. Riding on a war horse. Perhaps. That's a picture. Of a conqueror. A picture. Of a conquering hero.

He heard. The description. Of this person. He is the lion. Of the tribe of Judah. The root of David. He heard that. But what he saw.

Doesn't seem to match. What he heard. Look in verse 6. And between the throne. And the four living creatures. And among the elders.

That is. Even right from the throne. The center of the universe. This conquering hero emerges. Right from.

The side of God himself. I saw a lamb. Standing. He saw. He sees a lamb. As though it had been slain. With seven horns.

[12 : 44] And with seven eyes. Which are the seven spirits of God. Sent out into all the earth. John saw. From the midst of the throne.

At the center of all things. Right next to God. A lamb. Who was slain. That doesn't seem.

In your mind's eye. If you started to conjure up. What this conquered hero. Might look like. You would not think. A lamb. You wouldn't even think. A lamb. Period. But a lamb.

Who was slain. A lamb. Who was slaughtered. Is what John saw. Sees. But note very carefully. How our Lord conquered.

The meaning of this. Is that he conquered. By self-sacrificial death. He conquered death. By dying on the cross. He conquered sin.

[13 : 38] By being a curse. He conquered. By suffering. And humiliation. This lamb. Who appeared to be slaughtered.

Is not actually. Is not actually. A picture of weakness. We will be wrong to think of it. As a picture of weakness. We are meant to see it. As a picture of power. The lamb.

Bears the messianic titles. Of the king. Who God. The king who God. Will give the everlasting kingdom to. He bears that title. But he's also described.

In here. As having seven horns. And seven eyes. Seven. Signifying perfection. Ones. Being.

The symbol of power. God. That's what on symbolizes. And eyes. Being the symbol of knowledge. So what we're being told.

[14 : 34] Is that this lamb. Is omnipotent. All powerful. We're being told. That he's omniscient. All knowing. He is the very image.

Of the invisible God. The one through. And for whom. All things were created. He is God incarnate. He alone.

Is worthy. To take the scroll. From God's hand. And bring about. The end of history. In perfect judgment. In perfect judgment. And love. And mercy.

And again. Here. In this text. We should take. Our cue. And understanding. From the action. Of the host of heaven. What did they do.

Upon seeing the worthy. One. Take the scroll. What did they do. They sang a new song. Saying. Worthy are you. To take the scroll. And to open its seals.

[15 : 31] For you were slain. And by your blood. You ransomed. People for God. From every tribe. And language. And people.

And nation. And you. Have made them. You. Have made them. A kingdom. And priests. To our God. And they shall reign. On the earth.

So. A slain lamb. May not strike you. As the picture. Of a conqueror. When it's a roaring lion. That you will.

You were expecting. But we ought to see. That the ways of God. Are not the ways of man. His wisdom. No one can fathom. This.

Is the wisdom. Of our God. Displayed. Might. Might I. This morning. Suggest to you. That if you see. That. Picture. Of a lamb.

[16 : 28] Who was slain. As pathetic. And weak. If you find it hard. To submit. To such a king. It's because. You haven't. Like John.

Fully appreciated. Your sin. Is because. You haven't. Fully appreciated. The wickedness. And helplessness. Of the state. That you're in. We are sinful.

We are wicked. We are rebellious. We are helpless. In pain. In the death. That we owe God. We need. Someone.

To come. And atone for us. To mediate. To advocate. For us. And he. Is worthy. We're told. Because he.

As. This. Advocate. This mediator. Is worthy. Because he. As. By his. Perfect. Obedience. Fulfilled.

[17 : 26] All the demands. Of the law. He is worthy. Because. Of his. Sacrificial death. He. Bore the curse. And he. Bore the full penalty.

Of your sin. Upon himself. Look. What it says. There. In the new song. That is. That it's. That it's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's. It's.

It's. By grace. Covering you. With his. Pure robes. Having your sin. Erased. He makes you.

A royal priesthood. To God. So what is your response. At this great salvation.

What is your response. What should be our response be. It cannot be, I must work hard to pay him back. If that's it, you've lost the plot.

[18 : 28] His salvation is not a loan to be paid back. In fact, it's impossible to do so. It's a free gift. The response must simply be praise and adoration, just like the host of heaven here.

Praise the Lord who has conquered sin and death. Praise him to whom belong the final victory. That's our response.

Furthermore, our response is to stick to the winning side. He has won the victory. He has conquered. The word that he has conquered, it doesn't mean that he has done it in the past. You know, we're used to people, yeah, he's a champion. But yeah, you know, like the Super Bowl. But next year they're going to relitigate and then a new champion will emerge. No, that's not the kind of context we're talking about here.

He has conquered. And he is conquering. And he will conquer. Consummate his victory. That's what we're being told here. It's a continuous progressive thing.

[19 : 35] He has conquered. So stick to the winning side. Christ has conquered. He's the victor.

And his rule and reign has been established and will endure for eternity. Again, I want us to see here. We must follow the example of the heavenly host.

In singing, worthy is the lamb who was slain. To receive power and wealth and wisdom and might. And honor and glory and blessing.

So as the heavenly host worship Jesus, we hold no less. We hold no less than our worship.

That should be our first and last response to this lamb who was slain. Notice here in this worship that he is enthroned with God on the heavenly throne.

[20 : 35] And rightly, all created beings, we're shown here, all of creation, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, who him worship.

To God and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen.

And the elders fell down and worshipped. So as we reflect on this glorious picture of the heavenly throne, we must come to terms, we must come to terms that Jesus is worthy to receive our worship.

I think we must also come to place our confidence and trust in him. Too often, the church reacts from a place of fear.

We are frightened. We are frightened by the wickedness of the world. We are frightened by the hatred against God's people.

[21:45] We are frightened by the open antagonism towards God's law and God's decree. We are frightened by the threat, the real threat upon us.

We follow God. We follow Jesus rather than the world. We are frightened by the ridicule of the world. We are frightened by the loss of influence and jobs and positions.

All these things are true. But one of the points of Revelation is to make us see that the devil and those in his power, although they threaten the church of God, although they threaten the people of God by persecution, by heresy, by temptation, they do all of that.

Revelation shows us. But we are meant to see by this vision that our king is victorious.

Note the word in the vision, in the song. He has conquered. This vision of our enthroned king is meant to give us confidence.

[23:08] The dragon is defeated. Christ is conquered. And the knowledge that we belong to God's kingdom is the basis upon which we are to resist the devil and all his hosts.

We are to resist, not giving up in despair to the powers that oppose the reign of God. This is the reason.

This is the reason. This is the basis by which we ourselves join the heavenly choir in song. And yes, we know. We know that joining our voices with theirs will be costly.

It will be costly to sing this song. It means persecution. It will mean loss of influence. It might even mean death.

It does for many of our brothers and sisters around the world. It has for many of God's faithful people throughout history. But, we know this.

[24:20] The path to power and victory for our Lord was through suffering and humiliation. And we must joyfully follow that path.

path. We must joyfully follow no matter what comes. And as we do, as we follow him, we cry, come, Lord Jesus.

Let us pray. O God, grant us strength by the power of your Holy Spirit to persevere in following the one who conquers.

Grant us, O Lord, also wisdom to see our life and situations through the lens of your present rule and future consummate triumph.

Help us to know with full confidence that you have indeed conquered. And help us not to lose hope or give in no matter the cost.

[25:29] We pray this in the name of the one who is worthy to receive blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever. Amen.