

Magnify The Glory of God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It's my privilege this morning to preach and to share God's word with you. This morning we're preaching out of the book of Revelation, so already I realize there's a lot of questions that come up with that book and a lot of different opinions about what the book of Revelation says.

It turns out this morning we're looking at two chapters, chapter 4 and chapter 5, which there's not a lot of controversy. There's not a lot of friction between beliefs. It's pretty straightforward.

And the reason we're looking at those two chapters this morning is related to this time of the year. We're stepping into a new year and often we think about, at least we entertain the concepts, how should I live this year?

What is it that I should be about? A lot of people make resolutions. Obviously this morning, as I share from the book of Revelation, it's more so this concept of what is God calling me to be about this year?

What is spiritually, what is God asking me to do? How should I live spiritually? What should be my goal spiritually this year? How should I live in light of the gospel?

[1 : 18] That's what I hope we'll see this morning in the book of Revelation. So I'd ask if you're able, if you would stand in honor of the reading of God's word. And we're going to actually read two chapters, chapter 4 and chapter 5 this morning.

And then we'll take a look and see what God has for us. So starting in chapter 4. After this, verse 1.

Verse 1.

Verse 1.

Verse 1.

[4 : 10] Verse 1.

Verse 1.

Verse 1.

and the elders, the voice of many angels, numbering myriads upon myriads and thousands upon thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

[6 : 14] And the four living creatures said, amen. And the elders fell down and worshiped. Let's pray. Father, this morning, would you open up our understanding to this passage in your book of Revelation?

Lord, would you move us deeply this morning by these truths and I pray in your name, amen. You can have a seat. So I feel the need to share about the interpretation of the book of Revelation.

It is sometimes very difficult and I won't spend much time on this. Ordinarily when I would teach about this book, I would say there's 10 keys to unlocking the truths of the book of Revelation.

This morning, I'm just going to share two. I don't have time to dig in deeply. One of those two truths is this, is that the book of Revelation uses symbols to share truths.

Many, and some would even say most of the passages are symbolic and they represent truths that we're intended to understand. So that's one.

[7 : 31] The second truth I would share, the second key to unlocking the understanding of the book of Revelation is this, is that Revelation, in my belief, is divided into seven sections that all cover the span from the first to the second coming of Christ.

I'll say it again. We're looking at seven parallel sections of the book of Revelation that cover the time frame between the first and second coming of Christ.

This morning, we're looking at a portion of the second parallel section. These parallel sections cover the same time frame, but they zoom in on different aspects of that time frame from the first to second coming of Christ.

Chapters four through seven are one of the parallel sections. This morning, we're looking at chapters four through five. So I would say this before we begin to dig in.

What we're looking at here is the time frame near the first coming of Christ. We're looking at the time frame when Christ, we will see in this passage, has died.

[8 : 44] He's given his life on the cross. He has been resurrected and seated at a place of power, and that's what we're looking at this morning. That's the time frame in history that we're talking about this morning in this book.

I want us to see four main points this morning out of these two chapters, four and five, four main points. And the first point is this, the Lord God Almighty reigns.

The first point, the Lord God Almighty reigns. How do I see that? Where do I see it? Let's look with me, if you will, starting in verse two.

So John, the apostle John is, he gives an intro here, and in verse two he says, that once I was in the spirit. And by the way, let me make this caveat.

There's no way I can answer all the questions of all the symbols, of all the things that are in these two chapters. So if you leave, say, wait a minute, what about that? Why didn't you tell me what that meant?

[9 : 42] There's no time. Would love to sit down with anybody and share a perspective and go through the book of Revelation with you. But this morning, it's an overview, okay? We're looking at this second verse and it talks about a throne.

So John is in the spirit. What does it mean to be in the spirit? It's as if all conscious awareness of the physical realm is put on hold while he's experiencing this vision.

So I want us to see that this is a vision that John is given and what we have here in our hands is a description of what he saw in this vision.

And so I believe that there's much symbolism here and I believe that this throne is symbolic. So there's an author who has written about the book of Revelation I greatly respect.

He says in this passage, he said to believe that this is a literal, physical interpretation that we need to take, he said it makes no sense.

[10 : 55] He says to believe that it's literal and physical, we would have to believe there's a physical throne in heaven and around this physical throne, there's 24 physical thrones and then there's a physical lamb who's standing, who looks like he's been slain, but he's standing in the midst of it all and he has seven horns and seven eyes.

And he says to believe that it's physical would be ludicrous. It makes no sense that these things would be physical.

He says it's symbolic and we want to look at the interpretation and what it means. What are we being shown here in this section of scripture?

So a throne and there's one who's seated on the throne. What does the throne represent? It represents a kingdom, right? He's on the throne and the one who is on the throne is the one who dictates, the one who shares, the one who oversees all that goes on in his kingdom.

And here we talk about one seated on the throne and if we look at the picture, there's a message in the picture. So you see it? There's a throne and around the throne are 24 elders and around the throne are four living creatures.

[12 : 14] What are these living creatures? We look at it and there's confusion here. It talks about a lion, an ox, the face of a man and an eagle. I don't want to get trapped into all of that in the time it would take to interpret all those things.

I would just say this, that the angels, excuse me, the living creatures are a high order of angels. They're continually in the presence of God and at any moment they're willing to do his bidding.

So you can see a throne that's the center of this picture and around the thrones are rainbow and around the throne are elders and other thrones and around the throne are these living creatures.

Do you see the picture of what's being shown here? At the center of it all is Jehovah God. Now we might look at this and say, wait a minute, it doesn't name Jehovah God here in verse two and verse three, but it does later when they're worshipping in verse eight.

It says, holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty. So who's being pictured here? Jehovah God's being pictured here. And what do we see in this picture?

[13 : 24] That he absolutely is reigning over all things. He's on the throne. Lest we think this is not shared in other places in scripture, listen to a couple of other passages where it talks about a similar concept of the reign of God.

You would possibly remember in the book of Daniel Nebuchadnezzar, the strongest or the most powerful, probably is a better way to say it, the most powerful man on earth at the time.

He was head of the Babylonian kingdom. And you remember when he stood and looked and look what all my hands have made. You remember what happened? God humbled him. And you remember for seven years, he'd lost his mind and he wandered around eating grass of the field like an animal.

And when his mind came back to him, the Lord gave him his mind back. Do you remember the declaration that he shared? It's in the book of Daniel, it says this, about the most high.

It says, he praised and honor him who lives forever. For his dominion is an everlasting dominion. And his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing.

[14 : 41] And he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay his hand or say to him, what have you done?

Do you hear the sovereignty of God that's declared by Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel? Listen to the way Isaiah would share it in his 46th chapter.

He says this, he says, I am God and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from the far country, I have spoken and I will bring it to pass. I have purposed and I will do it.

Do you hear in these two passages that when God declares a thing to be done, do you think anything can stand in his way? Do you think there's any power in all the universe that can stay the hand of God, that can prevent him from doing what his will desires?

[15 : 55] Nothing. One more. Maybe two more. Psalm 103, David. He's speaking prophetically about Christ and as he speaks, this is as if the words of Christ are on the page and we hear him say this, the Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all.

The Lord has established his throne. You hear that word again? Throne. The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all.

One more. Psalm 99 says this, the Lord reigns. Do you believe it? The vision of John, he sees it crystal clear.

This one who's seated on the throne, he is reigning. And David declares, the Lord reigns. Let the people tremble. He sits enthroned above the cherubim.

Let the earth quake. Isn't it interesting the tie between this book of Revelation, these Old Testament passages? Talking about a throne, talking about cherubim, talking about him sitting enthroned above all.

[17 : 18] So point number one, the Lord God Almighty reigns. You know, I've often thought about, I wonder what the center of the universe is. Have y'all ever thought about that?

You know, in science class, as I was going up through high school and even in college, the concept, well, maybe everything rotates around the earth and the earth is the center of the universe. Or maybe it all rotates around the sun and the sun is the center of the universe.

You know, this passage declares neither one of those are true. You know what it declares? The Lord God Almighty is the center of the universe. Everything moves according to his will and nothing stops what he desires.

Spiritually speaking, he is the spiritual center of the universe. And as such, point number two, he's worthy to be worshiped and praised. You believe it? Do you agree?

Listen to what the passage declares here about the Lord God Almighty. Verse three says, he who sat there had the appearance of Jasper in Carnelian.

[18 : 26] What in the world might that mean, right? To dig a little deeper, you would see that one of these is crystal clear. You can see through it. The other one is blood red.

So the interpretation would be a look at his holiness and his purity. His holiness and his purity. If we look down at verse eight, jump to verse eight, and we want to see a little more about who is this one seated on the throne?

Why is it that he's worthy to be worshiped? And verse eight says this, the four living creatures they are continually, let me say it this way.

They have an unveiled view of the glory of God. You understand what I mean by that? There is no veil. You and I, we see through, like the scripture says, through a glass dimly.

We can't see the greatness of the glory of God. We see the examples of, we see the workings of, we see the creation of God.

[19 : 36] We see the hand of God. We don't see the greatness of his glory in full view, but the angels do. You know, there is a day coming for his people.

We will see that glory in full view. But isn't it interesting that the angels who see his full glory, how they respond to the greatness of his holiness and his purity.

Here's what they do in verse eight. They never cease to say. Do you hear the wholeness of what's being said? They never cease.

Continually, moment by moment by moment, what do they do? They say this in their heart and with their voice. They make this proclamation. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and who is and who is to come.

Y'all know what that means? There's never a time he wasn't and there's never a time he won't be. And he's here now and he's present now and he knows all things.

[20 : 41] Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God. Verse nine. Whenever these creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who's seated on the throne, the Lord God Almighty, what happens to the 24 elders?

What do they do? What do we see here? They fall down before him. And as I pictured, I remember some Old Testament passages when men were exposed in part to the glory of God.

And what did they do? They either ran or they bowed down on their face, right? In honor of the glory of God. Remember, it'd take too long. My brain wants to go to all these examples, but it would take too long.

But you've read this before. You've seen it in scripture before that when we're in front of the presence of God and whatever veiled glory we see, it causes men to be on their face and lose strength because of his holiness.

And so what happens to these 24 elders? They fall down before him and they worship. And they throw their, cast their crowns before him. What in the world? Who are the elders? And what are the crowns?

[21 : 49] How did they get the crowns? What does this signify that they're throwing their crowns away? What does all that signify? Here's what I would say. And I know there might be some differing of opinions here, but I believe the 24 elders represent the Old Testament Christians and the New Testament Christians.

The number 12 symbolizes the people of God in the scriptures. The number 12 symbolizes the Old Testament Christians plus the number 12 New Testament Christians.

Together they are 24. In my belief, this represents all the Christians that have ever been on the face of the earth. And what is the response of all these Christians?

Certainly these 24 elders, they fall down in worship. Why? Because of the greatness and the glory and the holiness of Almighty God who is seated on the throne and is sovereign.

Okay, so what about the crowns? We've talked about they have golden crowns if you were to look back up earlier in the passage. What are the crowns? The crowns symbolize victory.

[22 : 58] What is the victory of a human, of a man? What is the victory? How does a man go from earth and live in this life to the presence of God in heaven?

In the presence of God, how did they get there? We will see that especially in chapter 5. But let me suffice it to say that they receive a crown because of victory.

What is the victory? The victory is over sin and death. You know that when a Christian dies, it's not the end? When a Christian dies, he goes.

And where does he go? He goes to be in the presence of Almighty God. That is victory, right? How did he achieve that victory? Was it because, man, they were smart?

Because they read their Bible a lot, because they gave a lot of money to the church, because they tried to be a good person, how is it that they earned this crown?

[23 : 53] They didn't earn it. It was a gift. The victory that we will enjoy one day as Christians is not something that we accomplished.

The victory that we enjoy is a gift from Almighty God to us through his son, Jesus Christ. And the crown of victory that this symbolizes when they throw their crown back before him, it's as if they're saying, it's not because of what we've done.

We don't deserve this crown. It's because of what you've done on our behalf. And we cast our crowns before you because the source of our salvation is you. And so they worship him.

And then in verse 11, worthy. What a powerful word. Worthy. Worthy are you, O Lord God, to receive glory and honor and power.

By your will, all things were created. Do you see the worthiness of Almighty God? Do you see the sovereignty of Almighty God?

[25 : 00] Do you see the worship that he deserves? And then we step into chapter 5. And the third point this morning is this.

God has an eternal plan. God has an eternal plan. And what is that plan? It's a plan of redemption.

The eternal plan of redemption. Where do we see that? Look with me, if you will. chapter 5, verse 1. And I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll.

What in the world does that mean? What is this scroll that's in his hand? Well, I would say this. When we read the book of Revelation, we always have to read it in light of the Old Testament.

Is there a place in the Old Testament where this term, this picture is displayed so that we can understand what's being said here? Well, it turns out in Psalm 40, again, a Psalm of David, David prophetically speaking as if Christ is speaking.

[26 : 15] And he says this, then I said, behold, I have come. And if you can understand this being Christ speaking, behold, I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do your will, oh my God. Your law is within my heart. In the scroll of the book. What is Christ referring to? What is David referring to in this Psalm? In the scroll of what book?

Look, this book. Have we not said so many times, do we not believe that the scripture is all about Jesus the Messiah?

It's about God's plan to send a Messiah so that he could save a people that would be with him for eternity. Throughout the pages of God's word, the scroll, as it's called by David, there is this picture of a plan from Genesis to Revelation that's being fulfilled by God.

This plan of redemption that is in this scroll according to this chapter 5. So let's go a little further.

[27 : 25] This scroll is sealed with seven seals and we go on to see that no one could open this scroll. What does it mean that the scroll could not be opened?

It's that the eternal plan of redemption could not be executed, could not be accomplished is what it would signify the fact that it can't be opened.

And so when John in this vision hears it, he says he weeps openly. Why? The holy, almighty God who's worthy to be worshipped has a plan that he desires to be executed and no one is worthy to take the scroll.

Can you see how John would be overwhelmed? How he would desire so greatly this plan be executed because the greatness of the one who desires it? And then one of the 24 elders comes over to him.

Remember, this is a vision. In the vision, one of the 24 elders comes to him and said, wait, you don't need to weep. You don't need to weep. Listen to what's said here in verse 5.

[28 : 35] And one of the elders said, weep no more. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has conquered. Man, I would sit here for quite a while.

We could have a whole sermon that speaks of this phrase, he has conquered. Who is it that has conquered? Who is this lion of the tribe of Judah?

Well, we would look back at Genesis 49 and we would see the blessing on the tribe of Judah, on the son Judah, and it refers to this concept of a lion pointing to the Messiah Jesus.

Christ was born through the lion of Judah and he is called here the lion of the tribe of Judah, the one that God was pointing to all along that was going to be born as the Messiah.

I mean, he says, the root of David. What is meant by that? He is descended from David. Wasn't that a covenant promised by God? There will always be someone to reign, on the throne to reign out of your descendants.

[29 : 53] The covenant promise of God is that I'm sending the Messiah through you, David, through your tribe, that is Judah. And he goes on to, in this picture, can you see it? If you were John, you had this bird's eye view of a throne with a God that's indescribable in all his glory and holiness and you've got these other Christians, the representatives, all Christians surrounding this throne and you have one walk in who is defeated and who is conquered and what does he look like?

He looks like a lamb slain. It's like, wait a minute. I thought he was a lion. I thought he roared and everybody ran. You know, the plan of God doesn't look like that.

You know, the plan of God, it looks different. Point number three is he has an eternal plan for redemption.

Point number four is this, is that God sent a lamb to accomplish his purpose. God sent a lamb to accomplish his plan, this plan of redemption.

A lamb. What rings in your ear when you hear this? Hopefully, at least two things ring in your ear. You remember in Egypt when all the plagues were taking place, the last plague?

[31 : 22] you remember that he was sending an angel of death to destroy all the firstborn in the land? And he said to the children of Israel, you need to take a lamb and you need to sacrifice that lamb.

You need to take the blood and you need to cover the lintel on both sides in the top and you need to shelter under the blood. And if you shelter under the blood, you will be saved.

the Passover lamb. And we see it declared by John the Baptist. You remember what he said when Christ walked up to the Jordan River where he was baptizing what John the Baptist said to his disciples?

He said, behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Behold, the lamb of God. Isn't it amazing that God could have created any story he wanted to and he chose to create this story, this plan that would need a savior, that would need someone who was willing to die and shed his blood on behalf of others?

This lamb. Isn't it interesting that this lamb is able to take the scroll? What does this mean?

[32 : 43] The scroll that no man was worthy to take and open. However, there was one found that was worthy to take the scroll and to open and unseal the scroll.

Do you see the symbolism here? Do you see the meaning of the text? The one who can open the scroll, this eternal plan of redemption is the one who has sacrificed his life on behalf of the people of God.

And he took the scroll and he opened the scroll one seal at a time, seven seals. Those seven seals, that number seven in the book of Revelation refers to spiritual completeness.

That is the complete work of God. Once these seven seals are removed, the work of God is complete. His plan of redemption is accomplished and there's only one who's able to accomplish it, that's Christ.

It's the lamb who died for the sake of a people. and we see it if we look down here, we see a new song.

[33 : 52] And this new song says this in verse 9, they sang a new song. Who sang it? In this context, who's singing? It's the 24 elders and the angels that are in the presence of God and John is hearing this incredible song and is saying, worthy are you.

Who's the you? It's referring to the lamb. Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals. Why is he worthy? It begs the question. Well, the song tells us why he's worthy.

What does it say? For you were slain and by your blood you ransomed a people for God. Do you hear the truth here? By your blood you ransomed!

a people for God. from every tribe and language and people and nation. What makes him worthy to open the seal?

What makes him able to satisfy the requirements of redemption? It's because he shed his blood.

[35 : 00] He died in our place. He lived a holy sinless life in our place and this lamb died in our place and he purchased a people.

What do you mean he purchased? We all had a sin debt and our sin debt had to be paid. How is it that a sin debt is paid according to the scripture? It takes perfection.

It takes the life of one who is perfect to be sacrificed on behalf of the one who is not perfect. The one who is being ransomed.

That we had a sin debt that was paid by the sacrificial life and death of Jesus the lamb in our place. And you have made them a kingdom.

You know what this is? Do you see what this is picturing? It's picturing the coronation of a king. This passage is a picture of the coronation of Jesus the king.

[36 : 12] Because of his sacrificial death in our place on our behalf people from every tribe and language and people and nation are now part of a kingdom that he's caused to come to pass and they shall reign on the earth.

Do you see the beautiful picture that's being painted here? Jehovah God the Almighty has an eternal plan and his eternal plan is very unexpected that he's going to send a lamb.

A lamb who is if we understand lambs and sheep we know that they're not aggressive. he didn't come with an army and though you remember in the gospel where it says he could have called down legions of angels to deliver him but though he could have called down those he chose not to he willingly chose to go to the cross understanding that apart from his death in our place we would never be able to enjoy the kingdom of God but because of his sacrifice we are now Christians a part of the kingdom of God and we shall reign on the earth and we like these elders will respond in a similar way.

Look with me for the rest of the chapter starting in verse 11 then I looked and heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels can you imagine there's coming a time when we as Christians will be part of this many angels numbering myriads upon myriads what's a myriad I don't know but it sounds big myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud voice worthy is the lamb who was slain to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing do you see the seven fold worship here and I heard every creature listen to this every creature in heaven on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all that is in them saying what to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever there's coming a day and when we will enjoy the incredible company of this worship you know

I love Handel's Messiah and I love it when there's three to four hundred people a big big big choir all the musicians sing in Handel's Messiah it I don't know if it moves y'all it certainly moves me often where I tear up I am overwhelmed with the incredible worship and it just the the the blending of the voices and the blending of the instruments is just powerful to me you know it's nothing like this this is gonna be far and away greater we can ever imagine let me ask this question what do you see in chapter five don't you see the gospel you see the gospel displayed here you know what the gospel is the gospel is that we as sinners have no hope of being in the presence of almighty God our sins have separated us from a holy God and unless

[40 : 01] God provides a way for us to be redeemed we will never enjoy the presence of God we'll never know him but he has a plan and his plan includes this lamb this plan for Jesus to take on flesh to step into humanity to become a man like us and to live a life with all the temptation and all that Satan would throw at him to live a life without sin and for him to willingly go to a cross and die in our place because we're the ones that deserve to be on the cross we're the ones deserve judgment we're the ones that deserve eternal punishment and to be separated from God but by God's plan he sent a savior Messiah Jesus who would be willing as a lamb to be slaughtered and slain in our place so that by his sacrifice God would forgive us and Christ would redeem a people to himself and that we one day will enjoy worship that is unimaginable even the greatest worship here can't compare to what we will enjoy when we see him in all his glory face to face let me just say this

I ask this question what should we be doing this next year how should we be living this next year it's my hope that as we read this beautiful passage that we'll see that we have a God an almighty God who reigns let me ask this y'all have times when your life is upside down you have times when circumstances are heavy you have times you say I wish it wasn't like this I don't know what the future holds I'm full of fear I don't know if I can make it I'm overwhelmed let me just let me let's let this word of God minister to you do you realize that God reigns and that God is on the throne and if he's your father if he's your God he will take care of all this you know he says we can depend on him if we were to read six and seven you know what we would see that as he peels these seals away you know what's in store for his people these these are often referred to as the seals of persecution you remember what Christ said if they persecuted me guess what

Christian there's persecution of some variety in store for all of us but he said I will sustain you I will never leave you forsake you I am absolutely on the throne and I have a purpose in all the things I send your way in the midst of these trials trust me in the midst of these trials look to me in the midst of these trials depend on me and in so doing you will see my glory in a way you've never seen it before what is it that God is calling us to this year do you hear him pulling you closer to himself do you hear him drawing you into an intimate relationship you know there may be some here that aren't in the kingdom and listen there's 22 years I wasn't in the kingdom I remember fully remember not until God grabbed my heart that I understand this gospel message but

I hope this morning if you're not in the kingdom I hope you hear that in Christ is our salvation if you are a believer I hope that you hear he's worthy to be worshiped you know what worship looks like for you and me on this side of the cross looks a whole lot like Romans 12 it says it would be right it would be considered worship to present our bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to him you know it's right that we would live for his kingdom right the book of Matthew says seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and I'll take care of all your needs are we willing to set Christ as Lord in our life are we willing to serve him Christian are we willing to live for his kingdom and his righteousness you know it's easy to say it's challenging to do pray with me Lord

God so amazing to look at this passage and see that you're absolutely seated on the throne and all of creation worships you Lord God you're the one that is a lover of our soul you're the almighty holy creator of all things God you're worthy of worship God I'm thankful for your plan of salvation this redemption that you have achieved through your son Jesus the lamb Passover lamb that was slain for us God I pray that you would do a work in our lives where we would no longer live for our own kingdom to build our own kingdom God I pray that you would do a work in our lives where we live for your kingdom and we worship you by giving our lives away for the sake of your kingdom God there's no way we can do that on our own strength and so I'm asking

[45 : 30] God you do a supernatural work in each of our lives where you'd be glorified by the way we live God we desire to magnify your name we thank you for the gospel that is so crystal clear here the gospel that has led to our salvation and God the gospel just shout your glory what a loving God that would provide a way for us to know you and be with you forever God we love you we praise you in Christ's name amen