

Revelation Chapter Four and Chapter Five

We're in a Bible Study about the book of Revelation – We have one through some amazing stuff – we have looked at the resurrected Jesus – we talked about TWO letters to two faith communities, just like us, in many respects, people who were encouraged by Jesus to have passion and have love for Him and for His kingdom

Now, we are on to chapters 4 and 5 – The Reason for HOPE!

Christian Hope is based on a snapshot of a coming reality, even a present reality, that's what John writes in chapters four and five of Revelation.

- HOPE is based upon the nature, character, and disposition of our God.
- HOPE is based upon the life, death, resurrection, and victory of God in Jesus
- HOPE is based upon the promises of God given to human beings through covenants, rainbows, commandments, and miraculous events
- HOPE is based upon the Word of God from our loving God who created us
- We have everything we need to be hopeful people
- God is HOPE, in fact, Peter says we have a LIVING HOPE in Jesus...HOPE of glory

Why This section of Revelation?

We've said this before - Revelation is a book many people would rather ignore.

One scholar gives Revelation's readers some advice:

- *"If you're disturbed by what you're reading, keep turning the page."*
- Get beyond the sensationalism. Don't get stuck on the ominous scenes of horrific "monsters" and stop, skipping over the hopeful ones without a second glance.
- When you carefully read Revelation you'll see a pattern.
- Every time the visions seem to take us to the brink of disaster, there is a new scene rich with promise and possibility on the next page...that's HOPE!
- Violence and destruction (whatever you are facing that brings you sense of hopelessness) do not have the last word according to Jesus.
- Even when we think things are going "down the tube," God remains with His people until the end.
- Things will get turned on their heads in ways we can't imagine despite the suffering of the moment.

Revelation chapters 4 and 5 are the spiritual "heart" of the book. We can have HOPE because, even in the craziest of situations, there is LAMB POWER – God has the final victory – that "chapter" has been written and is ready to be revealed in God's time (Kairos).

Chapter Four

1. 4:1 – *"After these things"*...transition words

4:1 – *"I looked and behold"* – typical visionary language used elsewhere in the Bible (see Ezekiel 10:1, 44:4, Daniel 10:5).

4:1 – *"a door"* – who is the door? John 10:9.

4:1 - The same voice that addressed John earlier in Revelation – summons him “*come up here*” and enter the heavenly realm.

4:1 – “*take place after these things*” – the key word is “after.”

4:1 – “*voice like a trumpet*” – ref. back to 1:10. This vision is very similar to Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1

2. 4:2 – John “*under the influence of the Spirit*” – see Joel 2:28

John sees someone “*sitting on the throne*” – what throne? Who is it and how is this person described in verse 3?

Throne denotes rulership and authority (see Ezekiel 1:26, 28, 10:1).

3. 4:2-11 – The throne of God.

Here’s an overview of the Throne of God:

4:3 – throne is “*jasper and sardius/ruby (red) (NASB) (carnelian – redish brown in ESV; emerald green in NIV) in appearance.*”

Theme – God is light

4:3 – says there is a “*rainbow around the throne*” – what is the rainbow a symbol of?

Theme – God is promise-keeper

4:4 – “*24 elders on 24 thrones*” – wearing white garments – white (Isaiah 1:18) – crowns of gold.

Theme – God is surrounded by His people in worship

4:5 – “*lightning and thunder*” surround throne – see Exodus 19:16ff and Psalm 18:12ff – God’s power in nature and symbol of judgement – theophany.

Theme – God is God of power

4:5 – “*seven lamps of fire*” – (defined as *seven spirits* – plural of *pneuma* – *pneumata* - of God – Isaiah 11:2 – seven-fold Spirit of God).

Theme – God is everywhere

4:6 – “*sea of glass*” – no one knows exactly what this means – it could mean:

The throne of God is NOT hidden but all can see!

Theme – God can be seen

4:6 – “*living beings*” that are near throne of God.

4:8 – What is everyone doing in eternity? Worship and Praise God.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 – introduces us to the scroll and seven seals – this scroll will be a dominant theme for the remainder of the book

5:1 – *the scroll is in the right hand of God* – Psalm 110 shows this to be a symbol of power and authority.

5:2 – the question, “*who is worthy to open the scroll*” – rhetorical.

5:3-4 – *No one can open the book*. John explodes into tears...why?

5:5 – Someone steps us:

- The Lion of Judah – messianic - symbol of strength, power and authority (Genesis 49:9).
- The Root of David – messianic “from David’s lineage a Savior will come” (Isaiah 11:1, 10).
- He alone is worthy to open the scroll – it has been sealed until the time of God’s final will being revealed (Daniel 8:26).

5:6 – The Savior is both Gentle and Strong

We expect to see ROARING LION – but we get a sacrificial Lamb! It is easy to see that He (Jesus, the Lamb of God) was sacrificed – Jeremiah 11:19. The Lamb, is NOT sheepish, but powerful:

7 horns – omnipotence

7 eyes – omniscience

7 Spirits of God – omnipresence

Here’s something interesting – trinitarian view of God in this chapter (see vs. 1, 6 and 7)

5:8 – *The Lamb takes the scroll and worship breaks out*

5:9 – *They sing a new song* (many, many references to that phrase in the Psalms 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 149:1).

5:11 – Is literally – “*10,000 of 10,000s and a thousand thousands*” – 10,000 is the largest single number of the Greek language.

Application

The issue of worship in Revelation 4 and 5 – descriptive AND prescriptive – how?

Remember - what is behind Revelation are not questions of when, or why, but rather of Who.

Who is at the center? Who is at the helm of history?

Who is this God in whose hands the future finally belongs?

Jesus is the Who of Revelation.