

The Governmental Center of the Universe – Jesus Takes The Scroll (Revelation 4-5)

I. Introduction to Revelation 4 and 5

- a. In Revelation 4 and 5, John got “caught up” and is shown the throne room of God, the governmental center of the universe. This is the beauty realm of God where His majesty and glory are on full display. **Revelation 4 and 5** are the theological framework for which the entire eschatological storyline hangs upon as they layout the governmental order that takes place in the throne room of God.
- b. It is absolutely necessary that normal believers embrace these two chapters of scripture and lean into the beauty of God described within them. This is important because the Holy Spirit is orchestrating a unified end-time worship and prayer movement that will function in the “Spirit of the tabernacle of David” (Amos prophesied an end-time restoration of the Tabernacle of David **Amos 9:11-12**). What is profound about the “tabernacle of David” is that God showed David the same heavenly pattern of worship that John saw in **Revelation 4 and 5**, which led David to replicate in Jerusalem a similar worship order like that he saw in Heaven.
 - i. The fact that tens of thousands of houses of prayer have “sprung up” over the last few decades seemingly out of nowhere speaks to the certainty of God’s intention to fulfill His end time plans and the urgency of the hour in which we live. Our generation (those alive on the earth right now) doesn’t get the “luxury” of living in passivity as though the end times are a “distant reality”.
 - ii. The greatest thing you can do with your life is to thrust yourself into the house of prayer, and equip those younger than you to cultivate the oil of intimacy and embrace the 150 chapters on the end times.
- c. If it was important for John to behold the beauty of God before He saw the end time events in **Revelation 6-22**, the same remains true for us. Our priority in life should be to behold the beauty of God. A true embrace of Biblical eschatology requires that we observe it all from the lens of the beauty and worth of God. A self-centered eisegetical approach (What do I get out of this?) to the end times can lead us to F-O-L-D (*Fear, Offense, Lust, Deception*). His beauty and His exaltation is the core reality of all existence, and **Revelation 4 and 5** give us insight into how it all works.

II. A Scene In Heaven

(Revelation 4:1-4 NASB) “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet [Jesus] speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.” 2 Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and someone [The Father] was sitting on the throne. 3 And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance. 4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.”

- a. After receiving the 7 letters to the 7 churches, John is caught up through a heavenly doorway. It’s important to understand that the rest of the book of Revelation takes place in a Heavenly spiritual experience.
- b. **The Father’s Throne** – Revelation 4 is a picture of the Father’s eternal throne. His majesty radiates colors, lights, fire, and perceivable glory. The descriptions of the radiance of the Father certainly have eternal depth in their meaning, so our study will only scratch the surface.

(Daniel 7:9-10 NASB) “I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. 10 A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were serving Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court convened, And the books were opened.”

(Ezekiel 1: 26-28 NASB) ...there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. 27 Then I noticed from the appearance of His waist and upward something like gleaming metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. 28 Like the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.”

- c. **A jasper stone** – A jasper stone usually red, yellow, brown, green, and sometimes blue in color resembling a diamond. This speaks to the purity and perfection of God.
- d. **Sardius in appearance** - A radiating red light speaks of the redemptive quality of God. Both Jasper and sardius (ruby) were used in the high priests breast plate (*Exodus 28:17*).
- e. **A rainbow around the throne, like and emerald in appearance** – Emerald is green, speaking of life. The rainbow speaks of God’s promises. This Emerald rainbow speaks of God being the author of life and the one who promises eternal life. It also can speak to the multifaceted dimensions of God’s beauty that transcend our current understanding. Imagine looking at something through an emerald or diamond and how it radiates light differently.
- f. **Twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting** – These “elders” are enthroned, robed, and crowned speaking of their authority to rule and reign. The number 24 is symbolic of priesthood and speaks of Christ’s rule. These 24 elders are not likely angels (*no where in scripture do we see angels ruling sitting on thrones*), but are likely redeemed humans functioning in a high level of priestly ruling and reigning with God. Scripture speaks often about humanity ruling and reigning with Christ, not to mention the white robes and crowns we receive (*Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30; 2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12; Revelation 1:6; 2:10; 2:26-27, 5:10, 19:7; 20:4; Isaiah 28:5; 1 Peter 5:4*). It is possible that the 24 elders are not always the same 24 people.

III. The Father’s Glorious Throne & The Worship Around The Throne

(Revelation 4:5-11 NASB) “Out from the throne came flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God; 6 and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. 7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second creature like a calf, the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.” 9 And when the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and they will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

- a. **Flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder** – God’s power and authority is displayed by a sort of “electric symphony and light show” proceeding “out from” the throne. He dwells in unapproachable light (*1 Timothy 1:16*). When God came down on Mt. Sinai to give Moses the 10

commandments He came in lightning and thunder as well causing the Israelites to tremble (*Exodus 19:16*).

- b. **Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God** – These are connected to the 7 spirits of God referenced earlier in Revelation representing The all-encompassing ministry of the Holy Spirit

(Isaiah 11:2 NASB) “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

- c. **Sea of glass like crystal** – The sea of glass is meant to be a huge gathering place of the saints (*Revelation 7:9*) and angles also referred to as “*pavement of sapphire*” (*Exodus 24:10*). It is also “*mingled with fire*” (*Revelation 15:2*). While you can stand on this sea of you can also be “*under it*” (*Ezekiel 1:22*). In Moses’ tabernacle a basin of bronze was set up before the tent of meeting, in order for the priests to cleanse themselves before meeting with God. The sea of glass mingled with fire speaks of the eternal cleansing and redemption we receive when we approach God.
- d. **Four Living Creatures** – These 4 living creatures seem to exist for the purpose of declaring the transcendence of God “day and night they never cease to say...”. It’s possible that they are the same “living creatures” mentioned in *Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 & 10* or that they are entirely different. It seems as though there are different living creatures with different functions some called “*seraphim*” (*Isaiah 6*), some called “*cherubim*” (*Ezekiel 10*).
- i. **Full of eyes** – They are continually looking at God but likely can’t behold His full glory with one eye alone. Their eyes could also function differently than human eyes so that they can see different dimensions of God’s glory. They have eyes even within them.
- ii. **The 4 faces of the living creatures** – Each of the 4 faces has meaning though it’s not explicitly defined in Revelation 4. There have been MANY assumptions throughout history as to what their faces can symbolize. Simply put I believe the “man” represents dominion, the “lion” represents “authority/leadership”, the calf/ox represents “humility, hard work”, and the “flying eagle” represents wisdom and foresight. These creatures are radiating facets of God’s character. These creatures were likely created before men, lions, calves, and eagles, pointing to the fact that EVERYTHING in creation is a reflection of God.
- e. **Continual Antiphonal (Responsive) Worship** – The Father is worthy because He created all things (*Revelation 4:11*). Everything before the throne responds to the worth of the Father in continual antiphonal worship. When the elders hear the 4 living creatures give glory honor and thanks, they respond by falling down and casting their crowns and declaring His worth.

IV. The Only One Worthy To Take The Scroll And Open It’s Seals

(Revelation 5:1-7 NASB) “I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to be able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”

- a. **The Scroll, God’s End-Time Battle Plan & The Title Deed To The Earth** – The scripture does not explicitly say what is written on the scroll in the Father’s hand, however based on context we can concur

that it exists as a legal document as sort of “*title deed*” to the earth and it also contains details related to the end-time battle plan. The scroll is the most important document related to return of Jesus.

- i. **Title Deed** – Though God owns the earth, He set it under man’s authority for eternity. This means a “man” must be found worthy to open the scroll and loose it’s seals. This is the significance of Jesus being the glorious “*Son of Man*”. He will righteously steward the earth in intimate partnership with the saints.

(Psalm 2:7-9 NASB) “I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have fathered You. 8 Ask it of Me, and I will certainly give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.’”

(Revelation 5:9 NASB) “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased people for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation.”

- ii. **Battle Plan** – Each time one of the 7 seals is broken off of the scroll, a righteous judgment is released on the earth directed at the antichrist and his empire (*Revelation 6; 8:1-5*). When all the seals are broken off, all of heaven will go silent for about a half an hour (*Revelation 8:1*). This is likely related to the significance, severity, and urgency of that which is written on the scroll and what is about to come as a result of the broken seals.
- b. **Jesus is the only one worthy to open the scroll and loose it’s seals** – John has a crisis moment when he realizes that no one is able to open the scroll. This speaks to the significance of the scroll and it’s necessity to be opened. No person was found worthy to open the scroll and John wept and mourned that tragedy. However, John then saw a Lamb that had been slain (Jesus) called “*The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*” who was qualified, capable, and committed to taking the scroll and loose it’s seals.
- c. **The lion that is from the tribe of Judah** – In Genesis, Jacob refers to His son (*and future tribe*) as a lion’s cub and a lion. Jacob prophesied “*the scepter would not depart from Judah until Shiloh (coming Messiah) comes and receive obedience from the nations (Clearly an end-time prophesy)*”. Jesus was born into the tribe of Judah, which was the first hint at His deity. *Revelation 5:5* identifies Jesus as this lion from the tribe of Judah. The Lion analogy speaks to authority, leadership, strength, ferocity, etc.

(Genesis 49:9-10 NASB) “Judah is a lion’s cub; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares to stir him up? 10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

- d. **The Root of David** – This term speaks to Jesus’ kingship and power to rule the nations. He possesses the wealth and resources of the eternal promised messiah that was prophesied to come through the lineage of David.

(Isaiah 9:7 NASB) “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of armies will accomplish this.”

- e. **A Lamb Standing as if slaughtered** – This title gives great insight into why Jesus is able to open the scroll and loose it’s seals. Though He is the Lion from Judah and the Root of David, This picture of Him as a “*slaughtered lamb*” is what has actually qualified Him to take the scroll and rule the nations. *Revelation 5:9* verifies this fact in plain language. This is a firm reminder that the end times belong to Jesus, they are not Satan’s end times or the Antichrists end times. The contents of the scroll are loosed by the only one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth who is worthy.

(Revelation 5:9 NASB) “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased people for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation.”

(John 1:29 NASB) “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

(Hebrews 9:11-12 NASB) “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things having come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made by hands, that is, not of this creation; 12 and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all time, having obtained eternal redemption.”

- f. **Seven horns & seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth** – The Lamb’s horns speak to the perfection of His power as ruler and leader of the nations, while His eyes represent His perfect perspective and ability to behold all things. No other leader has ever ruled as perfectly and seen things more rightly than Jesus will in the Millennial age. The slaughtered Lamb is the only perfect leader. These horns and eyes also represent the 7 spirits of God. The 7 Spirits of God are mentioned in *Revelation 1* as being “*before His throne*”, but now mentioned as being “*sent out into all the earth*”. Due to the scriptures context, I believe this speaks to Jesus’ perfect leadership flooding the nations in the millennial age as depicted in *Isaiah 11*.

(Isaiah 11:1-10 NASB) “Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the Lord, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make decisions by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the humble of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt around His hips, and faithfulness the belt around His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fattened steer will be together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea. 10 Then on that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal flag for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.”

- g. **He came and took the scroll** – The slaughtered Lamb taking the scroll from the Father’s hand is a powerful picture of the willingness and confidence of Jesus to rule and reign.
- h. **Out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne** - The Father held the scroll in His right hand because that's where Jesus is seated. In that time in history, someone of high authority who put another person at their right hand gave them equal honor with themselves and recognized them as possessing equal dignity and authority which is why Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father.

(Ephesians 1:19-21 NASB) “And what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

V. The Only Worthy Response To The Worthy Lamb Taking The Scroll

(Revelation 5:8-14 NASB) “When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased people for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation. 10 You have made them into a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth.” 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that

was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.” 13 And I heard every created thing which is in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, or on the sea, and all the things in them, saying, “To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever.” 14 And the four living creatures were saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.”

- a. This is perhaps the most relevant set of verses in the book of Revelation for the body of Christ today. Clear understanding of these verses should ruin you for lesser things. These verses will confront the selfish ambition and shift destinies of those who take to heart what they say.
- b. It’s important to remember that though Jesus may currently hold scroll right now, He has not broken any of its seals. The breaking of the first seal is what initiates the final 3 ½ years of this age. **Revelation 6** and **8:1-5** detail what happens when the Lamb breaks each seal.
- c. When the Lamb took the scroll from the Father’s hand, a massive worship and prayer movement was initiated. These set of verses describe the current worship and prayer movement in Heaven and on the Earth that will increase dramatically before the return of the Lord and then continue for eternity.
- d. Harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints – Harps speak of musical worship that surrounds God’s throne. The golden bowls full of incense are clearly defined as, the “*prayers of the saints*”. What is important to realize is that when the golden bowls are full (filled up), *that is what initiates the breaking of the first seal*. These bowls full of incense show that Jesus is not waiting to initiate the end times because the earth needs to get “worse”, He’s waiting for the maturity of the Bride and partnership in prayer.
- e. A kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth – This is the eternal destiny for the righteous. We operate in this eternal destiny in part now, primarily through prayer and worship.
- f. Worthy is the lamb that was slaughtered – All of heaven continually declares the worth of the Lamb. He is worthy of all power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing. Responding rightly to the worth of Jesus means we surrender it ALL to Him, not just in a spiritual way, but also in every way possible. In fact, we don’t overcome Satan’s rage by praying for God to make our lives easy, we overcome by embracing the blood of the slaughtered lamb and not loving our lives to the point of death.

(Revelation 12:11 NASB) “And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death.”

- g. When the prayer movement on earth reaches it’s maturity Jesus will find faith on the earth and release speedy justice as the global bride cries out for His return (**Luke 18:7-8**). Jesus is patiently awaiting a Church that understands His worth and trusts Him to hold the scroll and break the seals. Jesus is not planning a rescue mission, He’s planning to come and shake everything that can be shaken to restore created order in partnership with a mature Bride who is in agreement with His perfect leadership.

(Luke 18:7-8 NASB) “Now, will God not bring about justice for His elect who cry out to Him day and night, and will He delay long for them? 8 I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

Questions for Discussion

1. What was one thing that was highlighted to you or stuck out in tonight’s teaching?
2. Did this teaching bring clarity to a thought or question you had related to the end times?
3. How does this teaching mobilize you to pray? (**1 Peter 4:7 NASB**) ***“The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer”***