

We tend to misuse words. Like “awesome” (“What an *awesome* ballgame that was!” It may have been a nail-biter, but did it really inspire *awe* in you?). Or “unique” (“That’s a unique hat he’s wearing.” Really? Is it really the only one like it on the planet?). And here’s another...*amazing*. “My car is amazing! It gets 40 mpg.” That’s great, but perhaps we ought to reserve the word “amazing” for things a little more breath-taking than our car’s gas efficiency.

I’ll show you something that truly is *amazing*. It’s what we are about to see when we open our Bibles and read the account of Revelation 5. Now this is amazing!

D. A. Carson suggests that Revelation 4 is to Revelation 5 what the setting is to a play. Revelation 4 sets the stage for the dramatic events of Revelation 5. In Revelation 4 John describes a vision of heaven. In Revelation 5, he describes the One who rules in heaven. In Revelation 4, we see a throne. In Revelation 5 we learn who sits on that throne.

Review Highlights from Revelation 4:

John was given a vision of heaven and used human vocabulary to attempt to describe the indescribable. Here's what he saw:

1. He saw an open door in heaven (1).
2. He saw a throne in heaven (2). This becomes the focus of chapter 5.
3. He saw what surrounded the throne (3). John uses most of chapter 4 to describe what was around, in front of, and near the throne--namely several angelic beings (see outline from last study). There were twenty-four elders (4) and four living creatures (6). These creatures engage in eternal worship of the One on the throne.

Q: What is the reason they give for giving worship to the One on the throne? Verse 11--"For you created all things" (a different reason will be given in chapter 5)

John's Vision in Revelation 5

Q: What are the first words of chapter 5? "Then I saw." John is going to describe (or try to!) what he saw in connection with the throne in heaven.

I. John saw a scroll (1).

The world did not have books as we think of books in John's day. They had scrolls.

A. Where was it? "In the right hand of the One on the throne"

Q: Who is the One on the throne? God (the Father?)

B. What was special about it?

1. It had writing on both sides.

Q: Why is that important? see *NIVsb*

2. It was sealed with seven seals.

To open the seals meant you had authority to enact the contents of the document. What's significant about this scroll? It seems to have to do with the future of the world. I've heard it described as the *title deed of the universe*.

II. John saw a mighty angel (2-5).

Q: What was true of this angel? He had quite a set of lungs! Everyone in the universe could hear him when...

A. He asked a question (2): "Who is worthy to open the scroll?"

B. No one was found (3).

Q: Where all was the search made for possible individuals?

Q: What effect did this have on John?...

C. John wept (4).

Q: Why?

D. One of the elders said, "Do not weep!" (5)

Q: Why not weep?

Note: For the imagery of the Lion of Judah see Gen 49:8-10

III. John saw a Lamb (6-10).

The elder told John to look and see the lion. When John did here's what he saw...

A. Here's what He looked like (6).

1. He looked like a lamb that had been slain.

Q: But the elder said he was a lion. How do you explain? It's not a half-lion, half-lamb image. Both expressions communicate something about this Person. He is both a lion *and* a lamb.

Q: What kind of lamb? A slain lamb. This is key. A slain lamb is not typically a symbol of victory in the world! But in God's plan it is. God chooses the weak things of the world to confound the mighty and wise.

2. He was standing in the center of the throne.

Q: Why is that significant? The other creatures in chapter four could not approach the throne. But the Lamb could stand right in the middle of it! This indicates His deity.

3. He was encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

Notice how everything revolves around the Lamb. He's at the center of reality.

4. He had seven horns and seven eyes.

Q: What does that indicate? "Seven" indicates completeness or fullness. Seven horns indicates complete strength, while seven eyes indicates complete knowledge (omniscience).

B. Here's what He did--came and took the scroll (7).

Q: What does that act indicate about the Lamb?

C. Here's what happened next (8-10).

1. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down (8).

Q: Why did His act of taking the scroll cause this response?

2. They sang a new song (9-10).

Discuss: What's so "new" about this new song?

- In the song, they expressed what the Lamb is worthy to do.
- to take the scroll
- to open the seals on the scroll

Note: No one else in the universe was worthy to do this.

- In the song, they expressed why the Lamb is worthy to do it.

Q: What had He done? Verse 9...

- You were slain.
- You purchased men for God.

Q: At what price? With His blood

Q: What kind of people did He purchase?

- You made them to be a kingdom.

Discuss: What does this verse indicate about *why* the Lord Jesus gave His life to save us? A clue--it wasn't so much for *our* sake as for *God's*.

IV. John looked and heard many angels (11-12).

From Revelation 4-5 we discover there are apparently different kinds of angelic beings. Here we meet some others. How many?

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A. There were too many to count.

B. They encircled the throne, the living creatures, and the elders.

C. They, too, sang about the worth of the Lamb.

1. They emphasized what He did.

2. They emphasized what He deserves.

Caution: Jesus did not die for us because *we* are worthy. Some look at the Cross and say, "That proves how worthy we are. Jesus died for us." No! The fact that a holy God would die for unworthy sinners proves He is worthy!

V. John heard every creature in the universe sing (13-14).

That's what verse 13 says--*every* creature. Where specifically? Does *every* mean *every*? Does this include non-Christians, too?

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A. They ascribed praise.

Q: To whom? Notice carefully...

1. It was directed to the One on the throne.

2. It was directed to the Lamb.

B. The four living creatures agreed.

Q: How did they express their agreement?

C. The elders fell down and worshiped.

Discuss: What effect does Revelation 5 have on you? What words come to mind? *Amazing?! What else?*

Observations:

1. *God has a certain plan for the future.*

There is a "scroll." It's in His hands. We need not worry about where this world is heading. We know who's in control!

2. *The fulfillment of God's plan is in the hands of the Lamb.*

He is worthy to take the scroll and open it. The future is in the hands of the One who gave His life for us.

Discuss: How should knowing that fact affect the way we live now?

3. *The purpose of redemption is to produce people who worship the One on the throne and the Lamb.*

Discuss: I repeat a question from last week. What do we learn about worship from what we observe in Revelation 4-5?