

A STORM and a SCROLL from the THRONE of GOD

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First, let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

INTRODUCTION:

The third section of Revelation begins with chapter four and continues through the last chapter. This section begins by directing our attention to a glorious scene in Heaven before our thoughts are returned back to earth to view the awesome judgments of the wicked. This lesson will show that God is properly magnified and praised as both Creator and Savior by those who are in Heaven. The 24 elders said the Father is worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because He has created all things for His pleasure (Rev 4:11). The angels in Heaven cry with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb [Christ] that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing" (Rev 5:12). Christ shed His blood to save us from eternal punishment for our sins. Both God the Father and God the Son receive worship in Heaven.

AIM OF THE LESSON:

Realize that we are created and saved to worship God, the Father, and His Son, the Lamb. John saw no temple in the New Jerusalem "for the Lord God almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev 21:22).

OUTLINE OF THE LESSON (use the Study Notes to add to this lesson plan as the Spirit leads you):

I. The Lord Is Worthy as Our Creator (4:1-11)

A. The Sovereign Creator (4:1-3)

John saw an open door in heaven and was taken through it in the spirit to behold the glories of God's dwelling place. His attention was first directed to a throne at the center of the scene: a throne symbolizes sovereignty. It was the throne of God the Father, who ruled His creation from that throne. He was like a jasper stone and a sardine stone. A jasper stone is clear and hard like a diamond which symbolizes His purity and unchangeable character. A sardine stone is red like a ruby; it symbolizes His demand for a blood payment for sin. It speaks of Jesus' blood shed for sinners, but it also speaks of sinners' blood shed during the Tribulation for rejecting Christ. God's wrath during the Tribulation is symbolized by a horrific storm that comes from His throne (4:5). However, around the throne is an emerald-colored rainbow which is a symbol of God's mercy (Gen 9:13-17). Even though the Lord will judge rebellious sinners in wrath, He will show mercy to repentant sinners (Heb 3:2).

APPLICATION: The description of the sovereign Creator in these Scriptures show us that He alone is worthy of our faith and service and deserves our undivided worship. Does He have your total worship?

B. The Sanctified Company (4:4-8)

Next, John saw twenty-four elders sitting on thrones around the Creator's throne (4:4). These thrones represent the church-age believers who are priests before God (reasons are given in the Study Notes). Church-age believers will be taken up to Heaven in the Rapture to receive their crowns of gold before the Tribulation judgments begin.

Suddenly John's attention was drawn back to the Lord's throne by the lightning, thundering and voices that proceeded from it (4:5). These represent the holy judgments of God and are reminiscent of His display of holiness at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:16 - 20:26). Furthermore, the seven lamps of fire before the throne symbolize the fiery judgment-ministry of the Holy Spirit (Isa 4:4). Seven is the number of completeness, so this represents the complete ministry of judgment by the Spirit.

Finally, John speaks of four living creatures in the midst of and around the throne (4:6-8). These living creatures are symbolic of all living beings. The living being that was like a lion, the king of all wild beasts, was the representative of all wild animals in God's creation. The living being that was like an ox, the strongest of all domesticated animals, was the representative of tamed animals. The living being that had a face like that of a man represented every person in the human race. And the living being that was like a flying eagle, the king of all birds, was the representative of all birds. All living beings will worship God in the future. These four creatures are full of eyes to represent their intelligence and they have six wings to symbolize their constant activity. It is possible that they use their wings for the same purpose as the seraphim of Isaiah 6:2. They are engaged in praising the Lord by saying, "Holy, holy, holy." These four

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living creatures praise their Creator day and night on behalf of all those that they represent, even while God's creation awaits its redemption (Rom 8: 19-23).

APPLICATION: Are you saved and ready for that day when you shall step into the presence of almighty God? If you are, then praise Him for the many blessings that He has given you and be busy serving Him.

C. The Sincere Confession (4:9-11)

The sincere praise of the four living creatures, who give glory, honor and thanks to God, causes the twenty-four elders to fall down before their Creator to worship Him, cast their crowns (rewards) before His throne, and offer their praise to Him (4:11).

APPLICATION: Give serious thought to the fact that you and all others, plus every living creature, were created for His pleasure. He does not exist for our pleasure. Does that change your purpose for living?

II. The Lamb Is Worthy as Our Savior (5:1-14)

A. The Sealed Scroll (5:1-4)

In the right hand of the sovereign Creator was a scroll that was sealed with seven seals. This scroll is the title deed to the earth. It was offered to anyone who was worthy to break the seven seals and open the scroll. This would indicate the rightful owner of the earth. Satan had usurped control of the earth when he got Adam and Eve to sin. Adam was appointed by God to be the king of the earth with all its creatures. When Adam obeyed Satan rather than God, he fell under the dominion of Satan, plus all creatures in his kingdom fell into bondage under Satan's power with him (Rom 8:19-23). Therefore, John had great concern when no one responded to take the scroll from God's hand and open it. If no one could claim the scroll, then the whole creation would continue to be under Satan's control.

APPLICATION: It would be serious if Satan ruled the earth forever. God created the earth for His glory, but if Satan could take it away from Him and rule it forever, then God does not have all power. And if Satan can defeat God in one area, he could defeat God in other areas as well, even in the area of your eternal salvation. You would have no guarantee that God could give you eternal life.

B. The Savior Lamb (5:5-7)

When it seemed that no one would be qualified to claim the title deed to the earth, break the seals and open the scroll, the Lion of the tribe of Judah appeared (Gen 49:9, 10). He is also identified as the Root of David (Rev 22:16) and as the Lamb that had been slain (John 1:29). This is none other than Jesus Christ Who died on the cross to redeem His creation from the penalty of sin. The Lamb had seven horns: horns are a symbol of strength (cf 1 Kgs. 22:11) and seven is a symbolic number for something that is complete or full (like the seven days of a week). So the Lamb will have complete strength to rule the whole world as King. The Lamb also has seven eyes, which indicates complete insight into all things happening in His Kingdom and the wisdom to deal with it correctly. This symbolizes His full ability to rule the earth as king.

APPLICATION: The sacrifice of Jesus Christ paid the price of redemption, not only for sinners, but for all of creation. His death makes it possible for all of His creation to be free from the control of Satan (Jn 8:36). He paid the penalty of sin for all sinners (1 Jn 2:2), but a person is not free from his sins until he asks Jesus to be his Savior. Have you asked Him to be your Savior (Jn 1:12)?

C. The Sincere Worshippers (5:8-14)

When the Lamb takes the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship Him. Around them an innumerable host of angels are gathered and they also praise the Lamb for being slain and say that He is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing (5:11-12). This is followed by praise to the Lamb from every creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

APPLICATION: If you are saved, worship the Lamb for your salvation. If you are at a loss for words, use 5:9, 10, and 12 as a good way to start.

OUR CREATOR AND SAVIOR IS WORTHY OF OUR WORSHIP