

REVELATION CHAPTER 4 & 5

Chapter Context

Chapter 3 concluded the description of "the things that are" (Revelation 1:19). Chapter 4 begins the final section of Revelation, regarding "the things that are to take place after this" (Revelation 1:19).

Chapter 1 describes the appearance of Jesus to John on the island of Patmos, at which time He commanded John to write to seven churches in Asia Minor. Chapters 2 and 3 provide us with the contents of Jesus' letters. Whereas chapters 1–3 relate events on earth, chapters 4 and 5 describe the vision John saw in heaven.

The following is a short outline of this entire vision...

Vision Of Heaven 4:1-5:14

Worship Before The Throne (4:1-11)

The Throne Of God (vs 1-5)

The Four Beast's Worship Of God (vs 6-11)

The Scroll And The Lamb (5:1-7)

Worship Of The Lamb (5:8-14)

Chapter 4 begins with a vision of worship taking place in heaven and contains 2 main divisions:

Revelation 4:1-5 – The throne of God

Revelation 4:6-11 – The worship of the four beasts and the twenty-four elders

SUMMARY OF EACH DIVISION OF CHAPTER 4:

Revelation 4:1-5 – The throne of God

In this first part of the vision, John sees a wondrous vision of the throne of God in heaven. This vision displays the worship of the Lord by the spirits of the saints of God who have died and gone on before us.

John sees God's all-encompassing authority symbolized by God sitting upon a throne. God's appearance is associated with colors that represent His holiness, justice, mercy and wrath. Likewise, the rainbow encircling the throne symbolizes God is the supremely faithful One who is the source of all physical and spiritual life.

John also sees "twenty-four elders" sitting upon twenty-four thrones. These twenty-four elders represent the saints of the most high with an emphasis on their position as the eternally blessed of God. They are twenty-four in number symbolizing their number includes both OT (12 tribes of Israel) and NT (12 apostles) saints. Their white robes reveal their righteous standing before God, their crowns symbolize for us their rewards for faithfulness including the authority to rule with Christ.

This part of the vision closes with lightning, thunder and voices coming from the throne representing the greatness of God, the One sitting on the throne. Also, John sees 7 lamps in front of the throne representing the one Holy Spirit ready to perform His seven-fold ministry at the bidding of God.

Revelation 4:6-11 – The worship of the four beasts and twenty-four elders.

In the second part of this vision, John observes a sea of glass proceeding from God's throne. This sea symbolizes the perfect way of salvation which contains the living water that gives access to eternal life. Symbolically, it also explains that this way of salvation finds its origin in God, it is revealed to mankind through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, it reveals man's true condition and the genuine way that secures deliverance from sin.

In this vision, John also sees four beasts, which are representative of the saints of God with an emphasis on the spiritual life that they possess. Their description and the accompanying symbolism are very detailed. Basically, we are taught that those who possess eternal life from Christ: rule with Christ; serve Christ; although saved, are weak and frail due to their sinful flesh; can transcend the sin and trials of this temporal world because of their everlasting life; recognize their sin, are ashamed of it, but do not let it hinder their service to Christ; their possession of spiritual knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We also see their main activity in heaven is worship their God by praising Him for who He is and what He has done for them.

In the final part of this vision, John sees the twenty-four elders worshipping God by casting their crowns before the throne of the Lord. This pictures for us the truth that all of our acts of service to the Lord are the result of His divine gracious enabling. Following the receipt of rewards, they are given back to God as the One who truly deserves them.

Summary of Revelation Chapter 5:

Chapter Context

Jesus commanded John to write "the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this." The first three chapters of Revelation contained those things which "were" and "are," at the time John wrote. Chapters 2 and 3 provided the contents of Jesus' letters to seven churches. Chapter 4 begins the largest and last section of Revelation, regarding events yet to take place when John wrote (Revelation 1:19). John introduced God seated upon His throne, with twenty-four elders and four angelic creatures nearby. Chapter 5 focuses on a scroll containing God's judgments on sin, and a search for someone to open it. Only Jesus is worthy to open it. When Jesus receives the scroll from God, He receives praise from every creature in heaven and on earth. In chapter 5 we have a continuation of this vision seen by the Apostle John. We will have the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Lamb who holds the world's history from creation to consummation in His hands.

The following is a short outline of the vision in chapter 5...

The Scroll And The Lamb (5:1-7)

Worship Of The Lamb (5:8-14)

Worship of The Saints (vs 8-10)

Worship of Saints and Angels (vs 11-12)

Worship of All Creation (vs 13-14)

SUMMARY OF EACH DIVISION OF CHAPTER:

Revelation 5:1-7 – The Scroll and the Lamb

Following the worship of God by the 4 beasts and 24 elders, we now have our concentration placed upon the sealed book that is in the hand of God.

This book is a scroll that represents the eternal inheritance that is awaiting the saints of God, while the 7 seals represent the events that must take place before the saints can receive their inheritance.

A search begins for one who is worthy to receive this scroll, break the seals and reveal its contents. No angel, nor man, is found worthy and the situation seems hopeless. But then, a Lamb (the Lord Jesus Christ) comes onto the scene and and rightfully, receives the scroll. John is shown that the Lamb is the only One that is worthy to break the seals (control the events leading up to eternity) and open the scroll (graciously bestow the eternal blessings to the saints.)

Revelation 5:8-14 – The Worship of the Lamb

Following the receipt of the sealed book (scroll) by the Lamb, the four beasts and 24 elders (the redeemed of God) fall to their knees in worship and submission to the Lamb. He is the One that has secured their eternal blessings.

In response to their appreciation for His work on their behalf, the redeemed begin a song of honor and praise for their Savior. In that song, they directly link the work of Christ with His worthiness to receive the scroll. Basically, they are singing that, because Christ was faithful to the Father and willing to give His life for those He loves, He alone deserves to rule the events of the world leading up to eternity and to bestow upon His people the eternal blessings He has acquired for them.

As their song continues the heavenly angels and finally the entire creation of God joins with them in this song of appreciation, honor and praise for the Lamb who has done so much for them.

May the Lord bless us as we seek to see Jesus in the pages of the book of Revelation.
