

THE WORSHIP OF CHRIST FOR OPENING THE BOOK, REVELATION 5:8-14

Well let's turn in our Bibles, please, to the book of Revelation, chapter 5. The subject of our study today is going to be verses 8 through 14; however, in order to pick up the context of verses 8 to 14, we're going to begin reading at verse 1 and read the entire chapter. So Revelation chapter 5, verses 1 through 14:

“¹ And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? ³ And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. ⁴ And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

“⁵ And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. ⁶ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. ⁷ And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. ⁸ And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰ and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

“¹¹ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; ¹² saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. ¹³ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. ¹⁴ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

Revelation chapter 4 and chapter 5 take us into the very throne room of God in heaven. These two chapters tell us that the entire universe is governed by the throne, and the entire universe is governed from the throne, and by the one who sits on the throne.

In chapter 4, the focus was on God the Father, who is seated on the throne. We saw the majesty and the glory that He possesses, and we saw the worship that He receives, all in chapter 4. We saw His holiness, we saw His sovereignty, we saw His authority, we saw His power, and we saw His eternity, all declared in chapter 4. We saw that it was He who created the heavens and the earth, the universe and all that it contains. As a result of this revelation of the glory of God the

Father sitting on the throne, all the angels and redeemed saints fell before the throne of God in humility, in praise, and in worship. We saw from chapter 4 that the Father is worthy to receive our recognition and our expression of praise for His glory and for His honor and His power.

But as we moved into chapter 5 last week, we saw that the focus shifted from God the Father to God the Son. Just as God the Father is revealed and worshiped in chapter 4, even so, God the Son is revealed and worshiped in chapter 5. Chapter 5 opens with God the Father holding a scroll in His right hand, which contains His purpose and plan and decree for human history, from the first coming of Christ on into eternity. And this scroll is sealed shut with seven seals. This closed and sealed scroll represents God's plan for the future, but it is a plan yet unrevealed and it is a plan yet unexecuted. If this scroll remains sealed, then God's plan and purposes will not be revealed and carried out. But if the seals are broken, then the plan of God from John's time on into eternity will not only be revealed, but that plan will be carried out.

So it is critical that God's plan regarding the future be revealed and carried out, but it will only be revealed and carried out if someone worthy could be found to break the seals and open the book; that is, to reveal God's plan and to execute that plan. And the good news of our passage is that even though no man is worthy or able to reveal and to execute God's decree and plan regarding the future, Jesus Christ the God-man *is* able to open the book and execute the plan that it contains.

As a result of His worthiness, Jesus is given the book, and takes it out of the right hand of the Father in verse 7. It says in verse 7, "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." So by this act, Jesus was given the authority and power to rule the world according to God's decree contained in the book. It was at this point that Jesus was coronated as King of the universe, crowned with glory and honor, and all authority in heaven and earth was given to Him.

So when Jesus entered heaven after His resurrection, He sat down at the right hand of the Father, sitting with Him in His throne, and all things were placed under His dominion. All of this was involved in Him being given the book. The Lamb now reigns. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has the mastery. The Son of David rules the Kingdom of God forever.

And because the Lamb rules all things and controls all events and has authority over all people, believers need not fear times of tribulation and persecution and difficulty as the future unfolds. Jesus is in control of it all, working it all together for our good and His glory in the establishment of His kingdom as He executes the decrees in the book. And the recognition of this should fill us with joy and confidence and worship. And this is exactly the response that those in heaven give, which we see in the remainder of chapter 5.

Last week we saw the worthiness of Christ to open the book sealed with seven seals, in verses 1 to 7. Today we want to look at the worship of Christ that is given to Him because He is able to take the book, to open the seals, and to execute the plan that is contained therein. So what we

want to do together then this week, having last week considered verses 1 to 7, is consider verses 8 to 14. And what we will see is the Lamb that was revealed in verses 1 to 7, is now the Lamb that is worshiped in verses 8 through 14.

So in the first place then this morning, let us consider together the provocation of praise to the Lamb. The provocation of praise to the Lamb in verses 8 to 16. Why the Lamb is being praised, verses 8 through 16 tell us.

Notice if you will verse 8: “And when he had taken the book...” Stop there for a minute. Consider that phrase—“And when he had taken the book.” There is the key phrase. There is the pivotal statement out of which flows everything that follows, not only in the remainder of the chapter, but in the remainder of the entire book. The whole rest of the book of Revelation is an unfolding of that event of Him taking the book.

When Jesus takes this scroll, He takes to Himself the authority and the power of God to rule the universe for the remainder of all time. This act of taking the scroll is His enthronement at the right hand of the Father. When He takes the book, we have the fulfillment of Psalm 2. I would like for you to turn, please, in your Bibles to Psalm 2, because we’re going to spend some time looking at that passage in relationship to this phrase, “And when he had taken the book.”

Psalm 2 opens with an examination of the attitude of humanity toward God: ¹Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ²The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, ³Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

So we see the defiance and we see the rebellion of human depravity manifested in the nations of the earth and the kings that rule them, setting themselves against God and saying, Let’s cast off God’s authority over us. We’re going to cast off his laws, we’re going to cast off His authority, and we are going to determine for ourselves how we are going to rule, and any implication of any kind that God has any authority over us and we have any accountability to Him, we are going to rage against that! We are going to persecute anyone who would suggest such a notion as that.

So when Jesus shows up on the earth and says, “God has authority over you, God has laws that bind you and you are accountable to God and you must be reconciled to God,” the kings of the earth rage against that. They imagine this vanity that somehow they could do away with God, and they would never have to have any accountability to Him.

Well, how does God respond to this expression of human defiance and human depravity and human rebellion? It says in verse 4, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” Their rebellion against God is like a chipmunk defying a grizzly bear!

“⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.” It is laughable, it is ludicrous that humanity would think in all of its collective arrogance that somehow it could do away with God and His authority over them and their accountability to Him and His judgment upon them for their defiance of Him. So God is angry and God vexes His wrath on them in His sore displeasure. They come under the displeasure of God for attempting to break His bands and to cast His cords asunder from Him, that is, defy His laws and declare themselves not bound by them in any way. God said, I will execute my wrath upon you and I will judge you and I will damn you to hell for your defiance of my authority over you.

This brings us to verse 6. God is speaking here: “Yet have I set *my* king upon my holy hill of Zion.” So we have the kings of the earth, verse 2, setting themselves up, and God says, No, *I* have a king, and I’m going to set *Him* up, and He’s going to rule over all these kings who think that they rule. Now this act of God setting His king upon His holy hill of Zion happened when Jesus was given the book. In other words, Psalm chapter 2 and verse 6 occurred at Revelation chapter 5 and verse 8.

Now when God sets Jesus upon the throne of heaven, when He gives Him the book, then Jesus speaks in verse 7: “I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. ⁸ Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” So Jesus is saying in verses 7 and 8 what God said to Him when He was enthroned in heaven upon being given the book.

Jesus now is enthroned and God the Father has said to Him, The end result of your incarnation, of me begetting you as my Son—the end result of the incarnation of Christ is the enthronement of Christ. Notice verse 7: “the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” And that seems to be a reference to the incarnation when Jesus was begotten in the womb of the Virgin Mary. And what was the outcome and the end and the conclusion of that begetting? It was, verse 8, “I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” Your incarnation leads to your enthronement.

You recall Luke chapter 1, verses 31 to 33—I read that to you last week, I believe—at the annunciation when the angel said to Mary, You are going to have a child conceived in you of the Holy Ghost. This is the incarnation. Then he says, That child will sit on the throne of David forever and ever. So the incarnation and the enthronement are spoken of in a single word to Mary, and this is what we see here—the begetting and the enthronement are a piece. They are all part of the whole of what God is doing through the Son that He gave and established as His King on His hill.

Now Jesus, having been enthroned in heaven, having been given all authority in heaven and earth, having authority over all the heathen in every part of the earth, is told in verse 9, “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” This is what’s going to happen to the heathen, the people, and the kings of the earth, and the rulers of the earth—all of whom rage against the Lord and take counsel against the Lord and against the King

He's set on His hill—what's going to happen to those defiant, rebellious people is that with the rod of the power of the authority that Jesus has as the enthroned King of the universe, He is going to crush them under the wrath of God.

Imagine, those of you who have pottery planters at your house. You know, you go to Wal-Mart and buy these nice clay pots and bring them home, and put potting soil in them and put plants in them. Suppose somebody comes along with a piece of rebar that's about two and a half feet long, and swings it with all their might against your pot. What happens to it? It goes into a thousand pieces, doesn't it? And that's exactly what's going to happen to the wicked. They are going to be destroyed by the rule of Christ. Their rule is going to be shattered by the rule of Christ. Their kingdoms are going to be broken and destroyed by the rule of Jesus.

Jesus will be the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and any king or any lord that rebels against Him will have their power and their authority completely destroyed. What happened to Rome when it set itself against the kingdom of God, and Caesar said, You've got to worship me. I'm lord! The kingdom was shattered with a rod of iron, and Rome is no more. And thus we can go down through history. Every kingdom that defies the Lord Jesus is destroyed *by* the Lord Jesus.

And America isn't exempt from that. As our nation defies the Lord Jesus and His laws, as we thumb our nose at God's Ten Commandments and His moral requirements on us, and say, "Let us break God's band asunder and cast His cords from us! We will slaughter the unborn. We will justify sexual perversion. We will invert the institution of marriage. We will defile the Lord's Day." He that sits in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord has America in derision, and the Lord's King who is sitting on the holy hill of Zion is in the process of destroying this nation with the rod of His wrath. We, America, will be shattered just like every nation that has forgotten God has been shattered.

Notice the counsel in verse 10: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth,"—those of you in verses 1, 2, 3 that are rebelling—"11 Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son,"—the idea is, Bow down and kiss His feet in humility and submission—"lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Imagine if it's kindled a lot! "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

So there are the options that we have toward the enthroned Jesus with the book in His hand: We can either bow in submission and trust in His authority and submit to His will and be blessed; or, we can suffer His anger and His shattering wrath. So this little phrase, "And when he had taken the book," is expanded and explained as to its meaning and implication in the totality of Psalm 2.

Let us turn back, please, to Revelation 5. Now when it says that Jesus is made the king on the holy hill of Zion, this does not mean that God the Father has left His throne. What it does mean is that Christ is seated upon the throne *with* His Father, so that from this moment forward, from Revelation 5:8 forward, this throne is, as it says in Revelation 22 and verse 1, "...the throne of God and of the Lamb," that is, no longer just the throne of God—now the throne of God and the

Lamb. At this point, Hebrews 1 and verse 3 tells us, “He sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.”

This enthronement of Christ begins a new era in heaven and on earth, in which Christ the Mediator assumes the throne of David, and the glorified saints begin to share in that rule as crowned kings who serve with and under the Son of David, King Jesus. You remember back in Revelation chapter 3 and verse 21, the promise to the overcomer? It says, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Now all of this was spoken of, not only in Psalm 2 but also in Daniel chapter 7, verses 13 and 14, when it says, “³I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

So in Psalm 2 and in Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14, we see Christ being established by the Father as the King, who will from that point forward rule the nations to the final victory and outcome of the Kingdom of God, and the final destruction and ruin of all those who rebel against it.

And so, all of heaven and all of earth see the ascension of Christ to His eternal throne when He takes the book from the hand of the Father, and this is the provocation of the outpouring of praise that follows in verses 8b, clear to verse 14—“And when he had taken the book.” Everything else follows from that phrase and the monumental event that it represents in the enthronement of Christ over the universe, after His resurrection, at the beginning of this age, which has been unfolding for 2,000 years, and will continue to unfold until Jesus returns.

Now notice if you will, Revelation 5 and verse 8. It says “And when he had taken the book,” things started to happen. It says, “The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials,” or bowls, “full of odors, which are the prayers of saints.” Notice how both the seraphim, represented by these four beasts, and the glorified saints, represented by the twentyfour elders, fall down before the Lamb. This is the act of those who wish to declare their recognition of and allegiance to the enthroned King.

Remember in Psalm 2, it says, “Kiss the Son,” right? So you’re down on your knees—He’s sitting on the throne—you’re down on your knees and your face is down on His feet, kissing His feet in humility and submission and allegiance. That’s what’s going on here. They fall down before the Lamb in an act of declaring their recognition of and their allegiance to the enthroned King. To bow at the feet of the King is to declare one’s submission to the King.

It says of the glorified saints represented by these twentyfour elders that they all have harps and golden bowls full of incense, which represent the prayers of the saints. Now these have Old

Testament roots. For example, in Psalm 33 and verse 2, it says, “Praise the Lord with harp: sing unto him with...an instrument of ten strings.” And the harp is a very common instrument that was used in the praise of God in the Old Testament. We use a harp today—it’s called a piano.

Then in Psalm 141, verses 1 and 2, David is praying and he says, “...Give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee. ²Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.” So when we pray, our prayers, as it were, go up to heaven to God, right? And when you burn incense, the smoke of the incense does what? It goes up. And it symbolically represents the going up of our prayers to God. And that’s why they burned incense in the Old Testament temple, because it symbolically represented the prayers of the priests on behalf of the people, ascending to God.

So the harps are instruments of joyful music that are played in praise and honor of the King. And the incense represents the petitions that are brought before the King, in recognition of His power and authority to grant the desires of those over whom He rules. The offering of praise to the King and the offering of petition before the King are both done in recognition of the majesty and honor and authority that that King possesses.

You know, if somebody’s not a king and they don’t have any power and authority, you don’t praise them and you don’t pray to them. They’re not worthy of praise, because they’re nobody special, and you don’t offer them prayer because they can’t do anything to fulfill it, right? But when you’re praising someone and you are praying to that someone, those very acts are saying that that *someone* has an exalted authority and a power and rule that makes them worthy of worship and makes them able to grant petitions. And thus, the harps and the incense, the praise and the prayers—both offered in recognition that the one to whom they are given is an enthroned King, and thus worthy of the one, and able to grant the requests of the other.

That brings us to verse 9. It says, “And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

It says, “And they sang a new song.” Now this song is new in that it contains new content about God’s saving works—saving works that had just been accomplished. And therefore, these songs contained content that could not have ever been sung before, because these saving works had never been accomplished before.

So a *new* work had been accomplished, namely, the redemption of Jesus on the cross for our sins, and a new song was now being sung about that new work that had just been achieved. This new song is the response of the redeemed saints in heaven to the new saving work that Christ had just accomplished on the cross, and the new covenant that He had just established as a result. So there’s a new saving work, there’s a new covenant, and therefore, there needs to be a new song that would incorporate those new acts in a new expression of worship.

The old song of Moses in Exodus chapter 15 was a response to God saving Israel out of Egypt. You remember? He saves them out of Egypt; ten plagues; gets them across the Red Sea; drowns Pharaoh. And what do they do? They sing the song of Moses, Exodus 15. So the old song of Moses in Exodus 15 was a response to God saving Israel out of Egypt. This new song of Revelation chapter 5 is a response to God saving His people from their sins—saving them out, not of Egypt, but out of the kingdom of Satan.

I'd like you to turn for a moment please to Revelation 15. Notice if you will verses 1 to 3. "1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire:"—we've heard of that before, right? It's the sea of glass before the throne—"and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name,"—that's the twentyfour elders, okay? The saved people in heaven, glorified saints—"stand on the sea of glass,"—they're standing on the sea of glass before the throne—"having the harps of God." Okay, there's the harps.

Verse 3, "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, *and* the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."

So in verse 3, it talks about the song of Moses, that's the old song; and the song of the Lamb, that's the new song. And they are singing of *all* of God's great redemptive works, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament—His redemptive works under the Old Covenant and His redemptive works under the New Covenant. And these are great and marvelous works that should cause every person to fear before the Lord and to worship the Lord and glorify His name. Eventually, it is the work that shall bring all nations to worship Him.

Now please turn back to Revelation 5. In Revelation 5, we want to notice the content of this new song and the marvelous expression it contains of all that Jesus as the Lamb of God accomplished for His people. Notice verse 9: "And they sang a new song, saying,"—and here's the content of the song—"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: *for*"—*because*, is the idea—"thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

So He says, You are worthy to reveal and execute the decrees contained in the scroll of God because you were slain; that is, You died a sacrificial, substitutionary death on the cross to atone for the sins of those for whom you died. And then He says, "[And thou] hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." And so these twentyfour elders are saying, The reason why we're here is because you redeemed us.

Now I want to just take a little aside here for a moment, for those of you who are aware of the textual issues that are at controversy in verses 9 and 10. The personal pronoun “us” has strong, very strong, textual evidence for its inclusion; and thus in verse 9, “us” absolutely should be there, though the New American Standard Version and the New International Version, and other modern critical text versions omit it. Even Metzger admits that the omission of it stands on weak evidence. However, in verse 10, the personal pronoun “us” is also included, and there’s very weak evidence for its inclusion. It should probably be omitted.

Now having said all of that, allow me to return to my exposition of the text. He says, “Thou... hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” That is, You have set us free by the payment of the ransom of your blood. Your blood was the ransom that was paid to set us free from the curse of the law and from bondage to Satan and death and the wrath of God, and you did so by paying the penalty to God’s law and God’s justice that they required for our sins—a penalty which was death under the wrath of God. It says in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7, “We have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

So what we have here in verse 8 is Jesus taking the book and the four beasts and the four and twenty elders falling down before the Lamb. Grammatically, it is the twentyfour elders that have the harps, that offer the prayers, that sing the new song. The angels are fallen down, but it’s the elders who are leading in the worship here. They have the harps, they offer the praise, they have the containers for the incense, they offer the prayers, and now they are the ones singing the songs—these twentyfour elders representing the redeemed church—and they are saying to the enthroned Christ, You were slain. You died the sacrificial substitutionary death on the cross. You have redeemed us to God by thy blood. You have set us free by the payment of the ransom.

And it says not only that you have redeemed us, in verse 9, but it also says, You have redeemed us by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Now this redemption that Jesus accomplished in redeeming the “us” to God, it says, is drawn out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” The clear implication of this passage is this: Jesus did not redeem all men without exception, but He redeemed some men out *of* every class and category of people on the earth. The Lamb did not purchase the salvation of every single individual who has ever lived, but rather He paid the ransom for His elect, who are chosen from *among* all the various categories of people that have ever lived.

Now there’s nothing narrow or limited about the redemption Christ provided. It is worldwide in its scope and it embraces every ethnic group, that is, every kindred; it embraces every linguistic group, that is, every tongue; it embraces every social group, that is, every people; and it embraces every political group, that is, every nation.

This redemption that Christ provided for some out *of* every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, is not only worldwide in its scope, it is overwhelmingly large in its numbers and size. It says in Revelation 7 and verse 9 that John beheld those who were before the throne of God, and he said it was “a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people,

and tongues, [which] stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.”

So what do we see Jesus doing? Reconciling a people to God out of and from among every class and category of people who have ever lived on the face of the earth, and the number of them is such a massive multitude that as they stand before throne of God, John says, it is hopeless to ever try to count them. There is broadness and a depth and a generosity in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ for His elect that is incomprehensible in its size and dimensions; so overwhelming that it renders us speechless to try to quantify it with any kind of words or adjectives or language.

Verse 10: “and hast made us unto our God kings and priests,” or it could be read and probably should be read, “and you have made them unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Not only has Christ redeemed a multitude which no man can number of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; verse 10 tells us He’s also made them both kings and priests, who will reign with Him as kings, and who will minister with Him as priests, both in heaven now, and later on the earth when He returns and recreates the new heavens and the new earth.

Notice the future focus of verse 10. He “hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we *shall* reign [with Him] on the earth.” So this song says that we are not only redeemed from wrath, verse 9, but we are also privileged to serve as kings and priests with Christ, both in heaven after we die, and in eternity in the new heavens and the new earth.

Now it is certainly true that we are presently kings and priests on this earth right now, and while we spoke extensively about our present kingship and our present priestly work as we stand alive on this earth right now when we expounded Revelation 1 and verse 6, the primary emphasis in Revelation on our kingly and priestly roles is not present, but future; it is not immediate, it is eschatological. That is, Revelation focuses on what our kingly and priestly work will be in heaven and in the future, and not so much on what it is now, here on earth. What it is now here on earth is spoken of in other books of the New Testament, and we referenced those when we expounded Revelation 1 and verse 6. But here, the perspective is priests and kings in heaven; priests and kings in eternity. And that’s where we’re going to leave it, because that’s where the focus is.

That brings us to our second major point this morning. We have seen the provocation of praise to the Lamb in verses 8 to 10. The provocation of the praise of the Lamb is that He has redeemed us and He has made us kings and priests. And when you see that He has redeemed us and that He has made us kings and priests, when you see that He is enthroned as God’s King on His holy hill of Zion, ruling the universe from this point forward, what should that cause us to do? Well it should cause us to praise Him.

So having seen the provocation of praise to the Lamb—He’s enthroned, He redeemed, He made us kings and priests—now secondly notice the proclamation of praise to the Lamb. The proclamation of praise to the Lamb is in verses 11 to 14.

Now when the created beings of the heavens and the earth behold the redeeming work of the Lamb of God in saving His people from their sins, and when they behold the honor that the Lamb places upon His people in making them kings and priests, and when they behold the authority He possesses, sitting in the throne with the Father, they cannot restrain their praise for a moment longer. They begin to zealously and loudly express their worship of the Lamb.

This praise begins, first of all, with the angels, the seraphim, and the elders—these three categories: angels, seraphim and elders, all in verse 11. Notice verse 11 says: “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts”—that’s the four seraphim that we saw in chapter 4—“and the elders:”—that’s the twentyfour elders.” So he heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders, “and the number of them,”—that is, of these angels which are distinguished from the seraphim, which are also angels; these are some other category of angel, of which it says that “the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

What this tells us is that we know how many seraphim there are—there are four. And we know how many elders there are—there are twentyfour. But when it comes to the angels, there’s “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.” In other words, there’s not just a few angels here, people. Ten thousand times ten thousand equals one hundred million. And on top of that, thousands and thousands more—uncountable more thousands. Now you recall “ten” is a symbolic number that conveys the concept of perfection. And the multiplication of numbers is simply an intensification of the meaning of those numbers. So it’s perfection times perfection, and perfection on top of perfection, is the idea here.

The point is, there is a perfect representation of all of the angels in heaven participating in the worship of God, however many angels there may be. However many there are, they are all perfectly participating in the worship of God, and are perfectly represented down to the very last one of them. None are absent, none fail to appear and offer worship. All of them are engaging in the praise of Almighty God. And all of the seraphim and all of the elders join in as well. So every being in heaven participates in the worship of the Lamb.

Now verse 12 tells us what this worship is, in terms of its content of expression. It says in verse 12 that they were “saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” Now the angels and the seraphim and the elders ascribe to the Lamb who was slain”—and precisely *because* He was slain—seven expressions of praise. Isn’t that remarkable? There’s seven. Who would’ve guessed? The number of completeness. They completely praised the Lord, they praised the Lord with completeness.

And so the Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise for having power; that is, the ability to accomplish any task. The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise for having riches; that is, He has the resources to meet any need. The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive

praise for having wisdom; that is, the understanding to solve any problem. The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise for having strength; that is, He has the might necessary to overcome any obstacle. The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive praise for having honor; that is, He is preeminent, above and beyond and over all other beings. The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise for having glory, which is the majesty that flows out of the perfection of His being. And then the Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise for having blessing; that is, the worship of every creature.

And so here is one who has the ability to accomplish any task; the resources to meet any need; the understanding to solve any problem; the might necessary to overcome any obstacle; the preeminence over all other creatures; the majesty of perfection; and the reception of all worship. This is the one that they are offering the praise to.

So this praise begins with the angels and the seraphim and the elders, as they behold the attributes of the Lamb of God who is now enthroned with the book in His hand, who has provided redemption for His people, who has elevated them into kings and priests. They say, These are the attributes that enabled Him to accomplish those marvelous works and to be in that exalted position. Let us praise Him for what He possesses and for who He is and for what He has done. And that is worship.

Now this praise not only begins with the angels and the seraphim and the elders, but this praise is now extended to all of the creatures of the earth. Notice verse 13: “And every creature which is in heaven,”—now the heaven there is not the heaven of the throne, it’s the sky, the atmosphere—“and every creature which is in [the atmosphere, or the sky], and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Verse 13 is telling us that there is no creature, wherever it may be found and whatever its capacity, that does not recognize the worth of the Lamb of God. Jesus was the one who created them all. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. So all of these creatures of the earth, though they be not redeemed from sin, they are the recipients of redemption from the curse, which fell on them in Genesis chapter 3. And they look to Jesus for redemption from the curse, so that one day the lion will be able to lie down with the lamb, and no longer be under the curse of being a carnivore. We could fill in examples. All the creatures are subject to death and pain and disease, are they not? Many of them are perverted in their functions. The rose brings forth thorns.

Whether the higher creation or the lower creation, whether they dwell in the sky or whether they dwell on the earth, whether they live on the land or whether they live in the ocean, whether they’re on the surface or under the surface—my gopher friends in the backyard—all of them, whatever creature it is and wherever it may be located, recognizes and declares the worthiness of God and of Christ to possess and exercise and receive ascriptions of blessing and honor and glory and power, because the lower creation knows it will be redeemed from the curse by Christ.

As Romans chapter 8, verses 20 to 22, declares, The creation groans waiting for the redemption. And in the new heavens and the new earth, the animals are going to be there—the birds, the fish, all the things we have now—they're all going to be there. But they are going to be delivered from the curse. And they praise the Lamb on the throne for the deliverance He wrought for *them* on the cross, because Jesus didn't just redeem us from our sins, He also redeemed the creation from the curse that sin brought on it.

So here is an exuberant repetition and echo of the previous praise, reemphasizing the exalted attributes and magnificent characteristics which God the Son and God the Father share. And you notice, there were four descriptions of praise here—blessing, honor, glory and power—not seven, because four is the number of the earth, right? Four corners of the earth—north, south, east, and west. So the idea is the whole earth is going to praise God. And so they take up and echo the praise and worship of the higher creation—the angels, the seraphim, and the redeemed saints. And here we have all the creatures of the earth echoing that praise.

And notice that this praise is equally given to the Son and the Father. Verse 13: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne,”—that's God the Father—“and unto the Lamb”—that's God the Son—“for ever and ever.” So this equality of their praise declares the equality of their persons, making it clear that each person possesses all of the divine essence. Everything that is said of the one can be equally said of the other.

That leads us to verse 14. “And the four beasts said,”—here's the seraphim chiming in now—“Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.” So the four seraphim give their hearty “Amen” to the praise of the creatures of the earth. They endorse and approve and affirm all that the creatures of the earth ascribe to God as true and valid and certain. Then the elders give their “Amen,” not verbally but physically by bowing their faces to the ground in humility and reverence and adoration before the enthroned Lamb of God. So the seraphim say “Amen” and the elders all fall on their faces before the Lord.

And so the Father is praised for creation in chapter 4, and the Son is praised for redemption in chapter 5. God made us, chapter 4; God redeemed us, chapter 5. And for that, we should offer Him endless, exuberant, and loud praise and worship. These two chapters proclaim with absolute clarity that the world's destiny and future is not under the control of some blind fate. We are in the hands of the God who made us and the Son who died for us, and therefore we have nothing to fear from Satan who opposes us. God has crushed and defeated him, and his last efforts to work his will and wreak his havoc is doomed to failure. We see that failure played out in the rest of the book of Revelation. Revelation is a book of glorious triumph for Christ and is a book of abysmal failure for Satan. Our persecutors never have the last word. The Lamb on the throne does, and in that lies our comfort and our confidence.

So as we look at the rest of the book, we always have to look at it from the perspective of the throne of God. And people, when you look at your life and the things that happen to you, you must look at them from the perspective of the throne, the enthroned Lamb who has the book, who is executing the decrees of God with respect to your particular life and all the particular details in it, and He's working them all together for the defeat of Satan and for the redemption of your soul, and for the execution of your glorious position of kings and priests.

When you recognize that, you can live in a spirit of joy and triumph, even though Satan is swirling all around, doing everything he can to try to pull you back and pull you down and pull you away. He is defeated and shall be defeated, not just in general, but in your life in particular. Recognize that, rejoice in the Lamb for that, praise Him, bow before Him, proclaim Him. We triumph in Him. Shall we pray together.

Our Father, we are so grateful for an enthroned Savior, to whom all authority has been given in heaven and in earth. Father, we pray that we would ever keep this vision of the glorified Christ and what He has done before our eyes, so that our hearts and minds are filled with ascriptions of praise to Him, expressions of confidence in Him, and a glad confession of Him before men.

Lord, we thank you for the optimistic eschatology that we have, that these shall make war with the Lamb, but the Lamb shall overcome them, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords, and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful.

Father, how thankful we are for our Savior, and how confident we are in our future. May we never allow the lies of defeat to be embraced by a heart of unbelief, but Lord, may we in faith affirm the victory that has been purchased, that is being carried out, and that will be fully experienced when He comes in the clouds of His glory to receive us to be with Himself. Until then, Father, help us to run the race with patience, and help us to keep looking to the author and finisher of our faith, the Lord Jesus. In His name we ask these things. Amen.