

Revelation Lesson 15

Date: Sun, Oct 22, 2017

Text: Rev 4:1 - 5:14



Rev 4 The apocalyptic visions of Revelation telling “the things which will take place” are about to begin. The stage has been set. The living & victorious Christ was introduced in ch. 1; chapters 2-3 show the audience for whom this drama is presented — God’s people, the church, about to be persecuted severely — represented by the “seven” churches of Asia. From here forward we will see scene after scene to assure those persecuted that God — not Caesar — is in control; when the final scene is revealed, we will

see God’s people victorious and Satan’s forces utterly defeated.

It only makes sense that before the scenes of battle begin, we see God in His power & glory. **This, after all, is the message of Revelation** — God rules, now & forever. His people may be tormented, tortured, and tested temporarily by His enemies, but make no mistake — He is in control and He will win the battle — all in His time.

We begin by being shown God’s glory — his place of reverence in the heavenly realm. The scene painted is awe-inspiring. We are left with no doubt that God is far above any man or anything on this earth.

What do the 24 thrones and elders represent? Different ideas have been promoted, but what seems to best fit is that this represents God’s people of both covenants. “12” symbolizes God’s people. In the Old Testament this was seen in the 12 patriarchs of Israel and the

resultant 12 tribes. In the New Testament we see the 12 apostles. “24” would be a combination of the representatives of God’s people from both the Old and New covenants — *all* of God’s people. **Why are they clothed in white and wearing gold crowns?** What do *you* think?

We are shown not only a fantastic throne and 24 surrounding thrones with elders, but also 4 frightening yet intriguing creatures. (SEE QUESTION 4.) All praise God as the creator.

1. John saw a door open in heaven, & was called to come up. From what vantage point does the Revelation take place (i.e., is John reporting from an *earthly* viewpoint or a *heavenly* one?)
2. How are God’s throne and the things surrounding his throne described?
3. Why does it say these “are the seven spirits of God”? (Eph 4:4 -- Is there more than 1 Spirit?)
4. Describe the 4 creatures surrounding the throne. What seems to be their purpose?
[Note: see for comparison Ezekiel 1:5-10, 18 & 10:20; Gen 3:24; Ex 25:18-22]
- 5.A. What do these 4 creatures do towards God?
- B. What is the 24 elders’ response to what the creatures do?

Rev 5 After being shown the throne and God in his glory, the focus turns to a “book”, and the one who can open it. Books then were not bound as ours are; they were typically scrolls, rolled on two rods. This scroll was so full that the writing overflowed onto the back. **The book is sealed with 7 seals**; since 7 symbolizes the perfect or complete, this scroll contains the full or complete will of God. **What is this book?** It does not appear to be the Book of Life (Rev 20:12.) We will see in the following 3 chapters (ch 6-8) that as each seal is opened, the contents of the scroll “are symbolically set forth by the events that take place . . .

Though man cannot fathom all of God’s ways, what is revealed as each part of the roll is unfolded serves as an encouragement to those who were suffering tribulation...” (Harkrider).

This book represents God’s plan to be effected upon the world. For those living in the 1st century it would be as related to Caesar-worship & persecution; *today* the circumstances may be different, but God’s impact is the *same*. **Then, as now, God’s plan is perfect and will be executed; then, as now, we will not be able to see this as God’s working unless it is viewed from heaven’s viewpoint!**

- C. Why do the 24 elders say God should receive glory, honor, & power?
6. This book in chapter 5 is sealed with 7 seals. What does “7” represent — why “7” seals?

Why does John weep when no man was found who was *worthy* to open the seals? The book contained God’s will in action; John must have grieved **not** because *he* wouldn’t get to see the contents, but because the plans of God would not

be fulfilled if none could open it. For the same reason, the lamb was given great praise thereafter. He had overcome! He was worthy to open the seals! God’s will would be done!

7. One of the elders tells John not to weep, that there is someone to open the book. How does the elder describe him (vs 5)? Why is he described this way? [See also Rev 22:16, Mt 22:41-45]
8. What animal does John see, and how does it appear?
9. How are the prayers of the saints pictured? What applications can YOU make?
10. Why do the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders say Jesus is worthy to open the book (vs 9-10)?
11. A. When the angels join in praise, they name 7 things that Christ was to receive because of being slain (vs 12). List these.
- B. This book was written to those who might face even death for the cause of Christ. What would this statement mean to them? (**and** to us!)

How many horns did the lamb have? _____ We will see later in Revelation a beast that has 10 horns. The Premillennialists tell us that this represents Rome at a time when there are 10 literal rulers *ruling at the same time*. Since this never yet happened, they say that a new Roman kingdom will form in the future, and when there are 10 kings Jesus will return and establish his 1,000 year kingdom. **IF this were true**, to be consistent, wouldn’t we have to say the same thing about Jesus here? That is, ch 5 could only occur when Jesus has 7 rulers all ruling at the same time! Since horns represent authority or power, doesn’t it make more sense that these are symbolic? (As is the rest of the vision of Revelation!) “7” represents the perfect or complete. *Also note* that, besides other verses we will consider later, at this point *the kingdom is already established* (Rev 1:6, Rev 5:10.) Keep this in mind when we get to chapter 13!

