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# THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

## LESSON 4 – The Title Deed to Creation

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### LESSON OBJECTIVE

The goal of this lesson is to understand the interpretation of chapters 4 and 5 of the Revelation, with particular emphasis on the meaning of the scroll God the Father gives to God the Son.

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### THE TRIBULATION OR DANIEL'S 70<sup>th</sup> WEEK

- A. Chapters 4 through 19 cover a seven year period of time known as the tribulation, and following on the divine outline we have in Revelation 1:19, these are future events
  - B. This period is also known as Daniel's 70<sup>th</sup> Week, a phrase based on the passage in Daniel 9:24-27
  - C. Sometimes the latter half of the tribulation (the latter 3.5 years) is referred to as the Great Tribulation because of the increased severity of the judgments during this time
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### THREE PRIMARY EVENTS PRECEDE THE TRIBULATION / 70<sup>th</sup> WEEK

- A. The rapture or snatching away of all Christians. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) Note that no church is mentioned in chapters 4 through 19 of the Revelation.
  - B. The failed attempt of the Northern Alliance to overrun Israel. This event is recorded in Ezekiel 38-39. Some observations are in order here:
    - i. This passage in Ezekiel does not record the so-called Battle of Armageddon; if you compare the relevant texts you will see significant differences (when we get to the Battle of Armageddon, we will discuss this point at more length).
    - ii. This is a confederacy of nations that are now Muslim nations (they hate Israel). Meshech and Tubal are occupied by modern Turkey. Persia is Iran. Put is Libya. Ethiopia is northern Africa. Gog (and Magog) are associated with the ancestors of the Scythians, who inhabited the Black Sea area. Gomer are probably associated with Cimmeria, north of the Black Sea. Togarmah may be associated with Turkey or with Armenia. Henry Morris' commentary, *The Genesis Record*, contains extensive notes about these nations in the portion addressing Genesis 10:2 ff.
    - iii. Probably will be part of the impetus for the Anti-Christ coming to power and making peace with Israel.
  - C. The Son of Perdition or Anti-Christ is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; Daniel 8, 9:27)
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### NOTES ON REVELATION 4

**4:1** "After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter."

As in Revelation 1:10, John is "in Spirit," a state of spiritual exaltation associated with prophetic revelation; normal understanding is surpassed in this state. In this state, he is whisked away to heaven; it is possible that we are to understand that John's spirit went to

heaven to see what God has to reveal to him. The phrase “after these things” looks at the period of time after the rapture of the Church and during Daniel’s 70<sup>th</sup> week. Recall the divine outline in Revelation 1:19 (“things which are” refers to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3, and “after these things” means after the churches are no longer there. The same phrase is used here). At this point in the future, the rapture has occurred. Revelation 3:10 points to the fact that churches will not undergo the hour of testing; they are not kept from tribulation, but the hour or time of the tribulation; they will not even enter that period. See 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 (the wrath to come is the tribulation period); 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (God has not destined us for wrath); Revelation 6:16-17 (identifying the tribulation as a time of wrath); Revelation 11:18 (identifying the tribulation as a time of wrath). We should also note that from Revelation 4 through 21 there is no mention of a church, although it is mentioned 19 times before Revelation 4.

**4:2** “And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.”

John sees God’s throne. This is a great theme of this book and is mentioned in every chapter except 2, 8, and 9. It is also a theme elsewhere in the Bible. (See Isaiah 6:1, Psalm 47:8, 1 Kings 22:19). The throne points to God’s right to judge and to rule and the fact that He is doing so regardless of whether certain individuals recognize Him as doing so. Remember, this book is about encouragement, and knowing that our God is on the throne is encouraging.

**4:3** “And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*”

The emphasis is on the glory and majesty of the One on the throne. Jasper (or diamond) is clear, probably signifying God’s holiness. The sardine is blood red and reminds us of God’s justice. The rainbow about the throne is green, probably suggesting God’s grace and mercy. God’s judgment is rooted in who He is, and the description of His majesty lays the foundation for the judgment to follow.

**4:4** “And round about the throne *were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*”

The elders *may be* representatives of the Lord’s churches in heaven (this is a common view). Their identification is much debated and the text simply does not explicitly identify them, and thus their identification is not crucial to understanding the overall message of the text. The clue is their raiment and crowns, which in this book are both indicative of the rewards of righteous deeds; for this reason I favor that we can at least say these are saints.

**4:5** “And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*”

The scene opens with flashings of lightning and thunder and voices. This reminds us of Mt. Sinai, after God defeated Egypt and freed the Israelites. (Exodus 19-20) After they were freed, they spent most of their time complaining even though God provided amply for their needs. Then, God warned them at Mt. Sinai that if man or beast touched the mountain, he or it would die. God manifested himself only to Moses on the mountain. Like them, we often tend to only recognize God once we hear the thunder. The seven spirits of

God refers to the Holy Spirit. (Isaiah 11:2; recall Revelation 1:4, 3:1) There is a trinitarian emphasis throughout this book.

**4:6-7** “And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind. **7** And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.”

The sea of glass like crystal suggests peace and calm, order, not chaos, and also purity. There is always a distance between God and man, and the sea of glass pictures it. The four creatures are cherubim and they minister around the throne of God. Their eyes indicate their wisdom; they don't miss anything. Lions are the king of the jungle, the cow is the strongest of the domesticated beast, the man is the supremacy of God's creation, and the eagle is supreme in the air; each of these looks at the best in its field. And these are submissive to God. As an aside, Satan was a cherub, but he swelled with pride, believing he had glory when in fact he only reflected God's glory. (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28)

**4:8** “And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.”

The words stress God's holiness and eternity. This reminds us of the words in the throne-room scene in Isaiah 6:1-3. They emphasize God's holiness by repeating the term three times. Understanding that God is not just good, but holy, is critical to our spiritual growth. When we see God for who he really is (holy, holy, holy), then we see ourselves through His eyes and are in a position to change those things about us that are unholy. The term “almighty” points to God's strength and power.

**4:9-11** “And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, **10** The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, **11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”

God is the sovereign creator God, the originator of all things. In verse 8 they worship God because of His eternity, but in verse 11 because He is the Creator. They worship God for who He is. We need to apply this to our prayer lives. Are your prayers just requests, or is there praise, and if there is praise, what about God do you praise? We also need to think about the songs we sing that we consider worship songs. What quality makes a song an appropriate worship song? (Ephesians 2:10)

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## NOTES ON REVELATION 5

**5:1-2** “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?”

Jesus, as the redeemer son, has become heir and sovereign of all things. But we do not yet see him subjecting all things to himself. See Philippians 2:3-11, Hebrews 1:1-9, 2:5-9; Acts 13:33. Jesus gained the right as Son to be heir and sovereign of all things, but how will he take it. Chapters 6 through 19 will unfold the methodology. The seven-sealed scroll in view here is the title deed to creation (the book of inheritance) and all blessings and rights that go along with it. It is what we will inherit in Jesus Christ. Note that under

Roman law, a will was written out on a scroll with seven seals. There are so many blessings that the scroll has the blessings written on front and back. Before there can be any inheritance, however, the seals must be broken and the scroll opened. Accordingly, the question asked of the strong angel in a loud voice is who is worthy to take the scroll. The answer, we will learn, is that only the Son is worthy. We will also see that the seals represent judgment on the earth, and before we can come into our inheritance, God's complete judgment on the earth must occur.

**5:3-4** “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.”

We can imagine that a silence fell over heaven and earth and even in Hades, and none are worthy to open the scroll. That no one is found worthy makes John weep; he weeps because all is lost if no one can open it.

**5:5** “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.”

The elder tells John to stop weeping because there is one worthy to open the scroll (and only one). He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, a reference to Genesis 49:8-10. He is also the root of David. (recall 2 Samuel 7, that great passage on the Davidic Covenant) Remember, Jesus is not only going to rule and reign as King, but will rule and reign on David's throne.

**5:6** “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.”

This is not just a lamb, but a small lamb, a living lamb carrying the wounds of a previous sacrifice, as did Jesus when he invited the disciples to put their hands in his side. He has seven horns (complete authority and power) and seven eyes (complete omniscience). Remember the significance of the number seven in this book, it is God's perfect number.

**5:7** “And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

The Lamb takes the scroll from God the Father. Only he can do this because only he is the heir of all things. Satan presently is exercising dominion, but his time is running out quickly. (Job 1:6-12; Matthew 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 4:4) Jesus is coming to take what is his, and we who are in Christ will inherit because Jesus inherits. (Galatians 4:7; Ephesians 1:14)

**5:8** “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 odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

The cherubim and the elders fall down to worship the Lamb. The golden bowls of incense are identified as the prayers of the saints. This implies they have a priestly function (e.g., Zacharias, John the Baptizer's father, attended to the incense). But why is this mentioned here? Because the Lord's Kingdom is about to be established on earth, as Christians have earnestly prayed for centuries. (Matthew 6:10; Luke 18:1-8)

**5:9** “And they sung 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;”

They sing a new song because one of the most significant events to ever occur is at hand, so important that the song in heaven changes. What was the old song? Probably a song looking forward to the kingdom. But now the kingdom on earth is about to be revealed and so the song is new. Notice that the song indicates that Jesus is worthy to inherit creation because of his redemptive work on our behalf. This is the victory song.

**5:10** “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

They were made king-priests, destined to rule and reign over God’s creation with Jesus Christ. Man in Adam could not do this, but Man in Christ (the new humanity) will do so. This is our future; we are to be king-priests, ruling and reigning with Jesus.

**5:11** “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;”

There are more angels here than can be counted. This is reminiscent of the throne scene in Daniel 7. People today that want to be praised of men often travel with an entourage. A large entourage might be a dozen or so people. God’s entourage is millions of angels.

**5:12** “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

He is worthy because he humbled himself, even to the point of death on a cross, and therefore God exalted him. The same principle applies to us – our exaltation follows our humility. We are to live putting others’ interests ahead of our own in humility. Because Jesus was highly exalted, we in Christ can also be exalted.

**5:13** “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 honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Every last person without exception will recognize the majesty and authority of God. They will recognize Jesus in the same way, and none will doubt that he is God.

**5:14** “And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

Here, we see the worship of the Son in the presence of the Father, which again points to Jesus’ deity. Knowing who God is compels us to worship; if you are not compelled to worship, you need to check your understanding of who God is.

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## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Henry M. Morris, *The Revelation Record*, Tyndale House Publishers (1983)

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is highly recommended that each person taking this course read chapters 4 and 5 for this lesson and chapters 6 and 7 for next week in Henry M. Morris’ commentary.