

REVELATION – SERMON 30

THE NEW SONG

Revelation 5:8-14

INTRODUCTION

- Before infidel Robert Ingersoll died, he left instructions for his funeral: “There will be no singing”.
- If there is no God, there is no afterlife, no heaven, no hope – then there is no singing
- But for the Christian, who believes in God, who believes in heaven, there is every reason to sing, even in this life, with its trials, suffering and death.
- Our imperfect singing of praise to God in this world is a foretaste of the perfect song of praise we will offer in heaven.
- The whole book of Revelation, but particularly chapter 5, shows us that heaven is a place of singing.
- One indication that we have a heavenly mind, is that we have a song in the heart.
- In the previous verses, the apostle was driven to tears when it seemed that no one could open the book.
- God does not promise us that we will not have tears in this life, but that there will come a time when he will wipe those tears away (Revelation 7:17; 21:4)
- In John’s case, his weeping ceased when the Lamb of God came forward, and showed that he, and only he, was worthy to take the book out of the right hand of the Father.
- Chapters 4-5 are a unit, and show a gradual building of the heavenly choir, beginning with four (4:8); increasing to 28 (4:10); to which is added myriads of angels (5:11); and is completed with every creature in heaven, earth, under the earth and in the sea (5:13)

I. THE CURRENT SONG OF THE UNDEFILED SAINTS (8-10)

A. They “fall down” before the Lamb

1. This is an act of profound worship
2. The beasts and elders repeatedly fall down before God in worship (Revelation 4:10; 5:14; 19:4)

B. The harps (cf. Revelation 14:2; 15:2)

1. Harps were used by the Levites as part of their ministry in the temple (2Chronicles 5:12; 29:25)
 2. The psalms show that the harp was used to accompany songs of praise to God (Psalm 33:2; 43:4; 71:22; 92:3; 149:3; 150:3)
 3. The harp is associated in Scripture with prophecy (1 Samuel 10:5; 2 Kings 3:15-16; 1 Chronicles 25:1)
 4. The harp and trumpet are the only two musical instruments described as being in heaven
- C. The golden vials of incense
1. This shows the priestly work of believers in heaven (Numbers 16:6-7)
 2. Incense is used to picture prayer in Scripture (Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10)
 3. This shows that the prayers of saints ascend to the very throne of heaven (Hebrews 4:16)
 4. This shows that prayer is pleasing to God
 5. These prayers may be the second and third petitions of the Lord's prayer, often prayed by believers over thousands of years, and only at this point being granted (Matthew 6:10; Luke 18:7-8)
- D. The "new" song
1. The new song in the Old Testament is associated with redemption and Christ's kingdom (Psalm 40:1-3; 96:1-13; 98:1-9; 149:1-9; Isaiah 42:10-12)
 2. The Lord's mercies are new every morning and demand new songs of praise (Lamentations 3:22-23)
 3. This song's theme is redemption, which is ever new, continually suggesting fresh thoughts of praise
 4. Christian song, in the light of the Gospel is "new" in comparison with the songs of the Old Covenant
 5. While believers may sing this song of redemption during their pilgrimage here on earth, to be able to sing this song in glory, having finished their course and received the full enjoyment of Christ's redemption, will make it an altogether "new" song
- E. The substance of the song
1. The worthiness of Lamb
 2. The redeeming work of the Lamb

- a. He was slain
 - b. He redeemed us by his blood
 - i. To redeem is to *purchase* at a price (1 Peter 1:18-19)
 - ii. Liberal theologians scoff at the doctrine of the blood atonement
 - iii. Redemption involves being purchased *from* something, and brought *to* something else
 - iv. The emphasis in this song is on being redeemed *to* God
 - c. Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation
 - d. And made us kings and priests unto our God
 - e. The coming kingdom of Christ where the saints will reign with him
3. This song shows us that Christian worship is Christ-centred, Christ-exalting and gospel-proclaiming

II. THE CELESTIAL SONG OF THE UNNUMBERED SPIRITS (11-12)

A. The myriad of angels

1. The language to describe the number indicates “myriads of myriads” – a countless multitude (Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22)
2. Though angels here are not explicitly stated as “singing” there is nothing in the text to preclude them from singing these words (cf. Job 38:7)

B. Their song of praise

1. They praise the worthiness of the Lamb to receive praise
2. They praise him because he was *slain*
3. What follows is a “heptad of praise” – seven ascriptions rendered to the Lamb
4. The definite article “the” precedes this list, indicated “the power, the riches, the wisdom, etc”
 - a. power – *dunamin*
 - b. riches – *plouton*
 - c. wisdom – *sophian*
 - d. strength – *ischun*
 - e. honour – *timen*

- f. glory – *doxan*
- g. blessing – *eulogian*
- 4. Glory, honour and power were given to the Father in 4:10-11 indicating the equality of essence of the Father and Son

III. THE COMPLETE SONG OF THE UNIVERSAL SPHERE (13-14)

A. Every creature, every where

- 1. This encompasses the *intelligent* creation that is capable of worship
- 2. It shows that Christ is not a created being, but separated to the creation, receiving worship from it (Colossians 1:15-17; cf. Revelation 22:8-9)
- 3. There is coming a day when *every* knee will bow before Christ, and *every* tongue confess him as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11)

B. The song

- 1. This echoes the song of the angels in v.12
- 2. Here it is rendered to both the Father and the Son

C. The assent of the beasts and elders

- 1. “Amen” – so be it
- 2. The elders fall down in worship before God

CONCLUSION

- 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is shown here to be nothing less than “God of very God”
- 2. Those who deny his deity and claim he is a created being cannot be saved
- 3. What a privilege believers will have to be included in such a heavenly choir
- 4. “Oh, this Lamb of God! He had a whole heaven to Himself, myriads of angels to do his pleasure, but this could not satisfy him. He must have sinners to share it with him!” (John Bunyan)
- 5. The worship in heaven is not murmured, mumbled or muttered, it is *loud* and full-throated
- 6. So should our worship be here as we prepare for worship there
- 7. Christ is repeatedly said to be “worthy” of all praise
- 8. Does my heart and life prove that the Lamb is worthy of all I am and have?