

Read Revelation 4&5

What – The revelation of John is one of the most studied books of the bible, but for what I believe are some of the worst reasons. People always seem to be looking for a clue as to what will happen in the future. Jesus was clear in Matthew that the end will come on us unexpectedly, so I believe that people are often looking for things in Revelation that they will never find. We would be a sorry lot if we knew the date of Christ's second coming. It is clear from scripture that we are simply to be ready, assuming it could happen today and acting with urgency but with the assurance that God will deliver on His promises. With that said, some of the true treasures that lie within the Book of Revelation go overlooked. Chapters 4 and 5 give us a beautiful picture of what worship will be like in heaven. John started with an open door (all are invited), and saw God on His throne, the true center of what our worship is supposed to be. An overwhelming sense of power and beauty surrounded both the worshippers and the worshipped. God was declared "Holy" and at those words all present fell prostrate to worship the king. As we moved to chapter 5, God's Word was declared by the only one worthy to declare it, the Lamb of God. A heavenly choir responded to the presence of Jesus and all of heaven celebrated in song and praise the glory of the Risen King of Kings. John was overwhelmed, and we should be too.

Why – This scripture is so important because Christian Worship today is one of the most divisive issues in the church. More churches split over worship style than over any other issue, and more often than not, those disagreements are not theological in nature, but rather people simply desiring "their" church to continue doing what they like. The picture into heavenly worship that is given us in Revelation, if examined and applied, could help us understand which changes and methods in worship are acceptable and which are not. It might also convince some that if worship stays within the biblical model, some changes are OK and may even be beneficial to all involved. First and foremost, this scripture reminded us that when we worship, it is about God and not about us. We do not come to "get" something, we come to "give" our hearts and songs and thanksgiving to God the Father and to His Son who died for us (hence the term "Lamb" used here). If we are not celebrating what Jesus did for us, we are not worshipping. Everything should focus on Him. In addition to that, we see what things are to be included in worship. Styles may vary, but song, prayer, sadness, and joy are all things that God apparently has planned for use in giving Him glory. With that, demonstrations of power and light (which I would see as drama), symbols (lampstands, chap 4 Verse 5) and the presence of God all can and should help us understand who God is. Most importantly, as most of chapter 5 demonstrated, God's Word and His love for the lost should take center stage in worship. When we are doing these things, modeling ourselves after John's peek into heaven, how can we help but structure worship that is fulfilling and honoring to God?

WOW – If you can read this scripture and not be in awe of what God's plan for current and future worship is, then you might reconsider whether you really know Jesus or not. This scripture is amazing because it demonstrated the power of a life lived in God's will. I know many of you are asking, "Where did He get that?" Let me show you. I hope you do not doubt that this scripture is talking about worship. Romans 12:1 reminds us,

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--**this is your spiritual act of worship.**” Worship occurs when we are living lives dedicated and directed by God. When you combine this scripture with those like Gal 5:25 (Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit) and 2 Tim 1:7 (God did not give us a Spirit of [fear],but of power, love and self control), we get a picture that shows us that a life lived in an attitude of worship is a life so powerful that the world will not stand a chance against it. This verse not only comments on the worship of the church as a body, but on the worship as a way of life for God’s people. Is your life a part of the celebration going on in heaven?