

### *Session 3: The Lamb Ascends the Throne*

#### *Questions to begin*

- If there is music in heaven, what kind of music would you look forward to hearing? What instrument would you like to play?
- If there are living creatures besides humans and angels in heaven, what kinds do you hope are there? What kinds do you hope are not there?

#### **The Reading: Rev 4:1 - 5:14**

<sup>4</sup>After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.’ <sup>2</sup>At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! <sup>3</sup>and the one seated there looks like jasper and cornelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. <sup>4</sup>Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. <sup>5</sup>Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; <sup>6</sup>and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: <sup>7</sup>the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. <sup>8</sup>and the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

‘Holy, holy, holy,  
the Lord God the Almighty,  
who was and is and is to come.’

<sup>9</sup>and whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, <sup>10</sup>the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,

<sup>11</sup> ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God,  
to receive glory and honour and power,  
for you created all things,  
and by your will they existed and were created.’

5 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; <sup>2</sup>and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’ <sup>3</sup>and no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>4</sup>and I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup>Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’

6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup>He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup>When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup>They sing a new song:

‘You are worthy to take the scroll  
and to open its seals,  
for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God  
saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;  
<sup>10</sup> you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God,  
and they will reign on earth.’

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup>singing with full voice,

‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might  
and honour and glory and blessing!’

<sup>13</sup>Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,

‘To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb  
be blessing and honour and glory and might  
for ever and ever!’

<sup>14</sup>and the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ and the elders fell down and worshipped.

*After reading the text, you may wish to consider the following:*

- What does John first see in heaven? What might be the significance of this?
- What is the main reason for the praise of the Enthroned One i.e. God in ch.4? For the praise of the Lamb i.e. Jesus, in ch.5? Is there a similarity between what the Enthroned One has done and what the Lamb has done?
- Compare 4:11 and 5:12 and reread 5:13. What might be the significance of the fact that the Lamb receives the same kind of praise as the Enthroned One?
- What are the similarities and differences between the symbolic visions of Jesus in chs 1 and 5? Consider what John hears as well as what he sees (1:18; 5:5). What aspect of Jesus does each vision stress?
- Some of John's images are hard to picture. What images do you find difficult? What does this suggest about whether the visions are to be interpreted literally?

**After session 3, you may wish to consider the following**

*Questions for Application*

- The great white throne is a 1<sup>st</sup> cent. image of authority. What modern image could be used to convey a sense of God's authority over all?
- John sees God at the centre of reality. What does it mean to have God at the centre of your life? Can you identify areas of your life where you are not letting God reign?
- Reflect on a situation in which you became aware that God was unfolding his plan for your life (things just fell into place, you prayed for guidance and then became certain about what God wanted you to do, there was an extraordinary coincidence, etc.). How has this affected your relationship with God?
- How could meditation on chs 4 and 5 deepen your participation in the Eucharist? In what way are all Christians "*a kingdom and priests serving our God*" (5:10)?

### *Suggestions for Prayer*

- Pray the prayers in 4:8 and 4:11. Take some time to thank God for particular things he has done in your life.
- Spend some time with this adaptation of the prayer in 5:9-10

Lord Jesus, you are worthy to be praised,  
worthy to unfold God's plan for our lives,  
because you were slaughtered,  
and by your blood you ransomed for God  
[mention members of your family or friends by name].  
You have made us to be a kingdom  
and priests serving our God,  
living with you forever.

- Pray the prayers in 5:12 and 5:13.