

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

Once again, John is utilizing language that made sense to the churches but not to his captors. The churches knew that John was speaking of Jesus when describing the lamb. Hopefully we hear the inclusive nature of Christ's Kingdom; 'persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.' In other words, under Jesus an empire has been crafted that is greater than all of Rome. Jesus, though crucified, has shown that true power and glory is witnessed in sacrificial love, and that ultimately this reign of love will rule forever.

Theology Connection:

While we live in a world defined by political entities, the Book of Revelations suggests that God's reign will not be limited by these powers. Christ's kingdom will ultimately topple all other realities as it is inclusive of all tribes and nations. It challenges any boundaries we might put upon the active grace of God. If we are to praise Christ, then we are called to live as Christ, showing love for the unlovable, and grace to those whom the legalist would deny.

Application:

Most of us run away from the Book of Revelations due to its misuse over the past 50 years. We are confused by the talk of 'end times.' Yet, our faith tradition would say that we have entered into the age of grace revealed at the cross. Revelations is simply a reiteration of that promise going forward. The kingdoms of the world rule by law, but the Kingdom of God rules by love. Might we make it our goal this week to consciously focus upon how we might better love our neighbor?

The Text: Revelations 5: 1-13

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

ADULT

Often the church looks divided and weak, especially following this pandemic. John is attempting to change our perception. If the churches to whom he was writing, known to be divided and under threat of persecution, could celebrate his vision of the Kingdom of God, can we not do the same. Let's cast aside our own perceptions and attempt to see this world through God's eyes. May the church live into the abundance of life as God intends for the followers of Christ.

YOUTH

Please read revelations 5: 1-13

John describes a scene of drama and praise in heaven and a scroll in the right hand of God. This scroll is sealed seven times over and written on both sides. Why do you think that is?

Does this scroll seem to symbolize judgement and sin?

What about the heavenly scene impresses you the most?

How does the content of the scroll help us to make sense of this world and life's circumstances?

How does this text challenge you to worship God with a new song?

How does this text give you a whole new way to see the world?

In what ways does this passage give you a picture of Jesus, heaven, or life's circumstances that is bigger than the one you had before?

Let us pray:

Dear God, thank you for your written word and the truths it contains. Thank you for sending your son, "the lamb of God" to forgive our sins. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

CHILDREN'S

In today's passage, John shares with us a vision that he had.

When he looks up to heaven, he sees a door wide open. A voice invites him up and soon he is in heaven. There is a throne surrounded by a rainbow with someone seated there. Coming from the throne is flashes of lightning and thunder. In front of the throne is 7 burning torches. All around the throne is 24 elders wearing white robes and golden crowns! Beside the throne are four creatures, each of them has many eyes and 6 wings, each one has a different face. They sing a song, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come." As they sing, the 24 elders place their crowns before the throne and sing their own song to God. Their song goes, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." John then sees many more amazing visions that both confuse and amaze him!

Think:

1. What do you think of this story?
2. If you have questions about the Bible, where can you go to get them answered?
3. If you saw a vision of heaven, what do you think it would be like?

Pray:

Dear Lord,

Please help us to place our trust in You. We know that You are the one true God, and we want to share that with everyone! Amen!