

Heaven's Holy Huddle

Revelation 5:1-13

(preached Pine Grove 1/22/17; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Take your Bibles and turn to Revelation 5...

Let us read these 14 verses and look at them this morning...

*5 I saw [a]in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a [b]book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the [c]book and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the [d]book or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the [e]book or to look into it; 5 and one of the elders *said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the [f]book and its seven seals." 6 And I saw [g]between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the [h]book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four*

*elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the [i]saints. 9 And they *sang a new song, saying,*

“Worthy are You to take the [j]book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Let us pray.

One of my favorite movies of all time is a basketball movie named Hoosiers..

It was made in the 80s and starred Gene Hackman as a basketball coach of a small high school in Indiana..

Yet, that small team made it all the way to the state championship of Indiana..

In the final game, they are playing a big school and it is going to come down the final shot..

So, the coach calls a timeout, and he is going to design the final play...

Everyone one of the players is kind of standing around like they dont feel like they can make the last shot...

Until their star player named Jimmy looks at the coach and tells him that he will make the last shot...

All the players get excited...

The coach calls a play to get Jimmy the ball, and he takes the last shot and the team wins...

But it all started in that little huddle as the team prepared to go out for that final play....

A similar scene will happen today in Revelation chapter 5 as God prepares for his final play on earth...

God's final play in world history will be to unleash his wrath against sin on all unbelievers who are alive on the earth at that time...

God's final play in world history will be to reclaim the earth as his own...

God's final play will be to undo the fall of this world, and set the world back in order under his rule...

God's final play is to bring the

But the question is...

Who wants to take on the responsibility of running God's final play?

Better yet, who is qualified to reclaim the earth from the grips of Satan and his demons?

Well, this morning we get a peek into the heavenly huddle as God prepares to win victory over His enemies in the world....

And we find out who is going to make the last play...

This scene begins in Revelation 5, verse 1...

So, let's begin in verse 1 with what I call....

I. The Search (1-4)

I I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

Now, let us put ourselves back into the book of Revelation...

Last week in chapter 4, the apostle John was taken to the throne room of heaven to get a glimpse of some future events in world history...

The year was 95 AD and John was on the island of Patmos, but he was transported in the Spirit to a time that is future to this very day...

John is taken to a scene in heaven as God prepares to bring the world to an end...

And last week, John simply gave us a description of what he saw in heaven....

He saw a throne and One seated on the throne...

Then he saw the people around the throne...

24 elders who we said represented the church that was in heaven at the time before the tribulation well protected from the wrath to come...

And then we saw 4 living creatures best seen as angels around the throne...

And then after giving us the center of heaven and the congregation in heaven, John gave us the conduct of heaven where the elders and angels were worshipping God...

They were worshipping his holiness and his power and his eternal nature and his creative ability to make the world out of nothing...

And so John took us to heaven in the moments leading up to the beginning of the end of the world, and though worship is going on, there is also other business to take care of...

So, we move from the scenery of heaven in chapter 4 to the search for someone in chapter 5...

And the search begins as John notices a book in the hand of the One on the throne...

The book was not shaped like we think of a book but was a large scroll, which is what a book would look like in the 1st century...

Though the scroll has writing on the inside and back, it is sealed on the end with 7 seals...

Often times, important documents would have multiple seals to prevent someone from opening it and tampering with the contents...

This would certainly be true of the title deed to the earth, which is what we see here...

So, John notices this book of document in the right hand of God...

Verse 2...

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the [c]book and to break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the [d]book or to look into it. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the [e]book or to look into it;

John eyes are then overcome by the sound in his ears...

The sound of a mighty angel shouting in heaven searching for someone who has the authority to open the book...

So, the search is on for anyone to open the scroll, but no one in heaven appears to have earned the right to open the scroll..

No one could no one open it, and therefore no one could look into it...

And the lack of response sends John to tears...

Now why would John be crying here?

I would suggest that we would all burst into tears if it seemed like this world would go on forever like it is...

But that is what John was faced with and we all would be face with if no one can open the scroll and reverse the curse...

If no one can rightfully claim the deed to the earth, then the earth will continue on its current downward path of increasing sin and rebellion against God...

If I thought for a minute that the world would continue to grow darker and darker without any hope of real change, I could throw myself into a depression pretty fast...

For a moment, John was having that thought as no one was stepping forward to claim this title deed book to the earth....

So, the search is on and it ain't looking good until verse
5.....

Where we go from the search to.....

II. The Savior (5-7)

Verse 5...

5and one of the elders *said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the [f]book and its seven seals.”

As John sits there in tears, he is immediately comforted by one of the 24 elders that we met last week in chapter 4...

And the message is both correction and comfort....

Hey, stop crying...

The Lion of Judah, the root of David.....

He has overcome to open the book and the seven seals....

Now, Jesus was a descendant of the tribe of Judah, one of the 12 tribes of Israel...

It was clear from prophecy that the Jewish Messiah...

The Jewish savior would come from the tribe of Judah...

Jesus was also a descendant within Judah from the family tree of David, who was Israel's greatest king...

Israel's greatest warrior and leader....

What had this Lion of Judah and descendant of David overcome?

He had overcome sin by being perfectly obedient in his life...

HE has also overcome death on the cross as His Father raised him from the dead...

This overcome of sin and death had earned Jesus the right to the title deed of the earth...

Remember, Adam and Eve were given the earth to subdue and rule over, but they sinned and gave up the deed to the earth....

Jesus earned that deed back through his perfect obedience...

And so he claims the deed that Adam and Eve gave up...

So, John's tears are turned to joy and his eyes are turned back to the throne of God....

Verse 6...

6 And I saw [g]between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

As John eyes are drawn back to the throne of God, he notices something that wasn't there before among the 24 elders and 4 living beings....

And that is a Lamb...

And notice, it has the marks like it had been killed but it was still alive, seen in the fact that the Lamb was still standing....

This is clearly a picture of the crucified and resurrected Christ...

The Lion is also a lamb...

His sacrificial death had earned him the power and might over the earth....

His slaughter has led to His triumph...

The Lion of Judah became the Lamb of the world...

And John was fixing his eyes on the Lamb...

The lamb has 7 horns, which are symbols of power in the animal world...

7 is the number of perfection....

The Lamb had perfect power..

But he also had perfect knowledge, symbolized by the seven eyes that see from one end of the earth to the other...

Put yourself in John's shoes for a minute...

You had known Christ...

You had watched him suffer and die a cruel death on the cross...

You had witnessed His resurrection...

You had believed His words that HE was the Savior of the World...

But now you have seen his privilege in heaven to see Jesus take the title deed to the earth from the hand of God...

This would have to thrill your heart...

You have believed Him to be the Messiah, but now you see first hand just who He is...

And so all your hope is realized...

All your obedience to Christ is rewarded with a look into heaven at this important point in God's plan for the world...

This is the moment that the entire universe has been waiting for...

If you think the inauguration of a new president of a nation is important....

Wait until a new King of the world prepares to take his seat on the world's throne...

What you see right there in verse 7 as Jesus takes the book from the hand of God is something that the world longed for ever since Adam and Eve gave in to temptation and lost that right to rule this planet...

If I were to pick the top 5 most important events of the Bible, this would be in the top 5...

This is a monumental in the history of the world, and John serves as our eyewitness who was taken to heaven to see it personally...

And so, we had a search for someone worthy to take the scroll, and now we have the Savior who overcame sin to take the scroll, let's now go to the final part of chapter 5...

Which is....

III. The Song (8-14)

Verse 8...

8 When He had taken the [h]book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the [i]saints

As Jesus takes the title deed to the earth from the hand of God, there are no more tears for John...

There is no more wonder over whether Jesus has done enough to win back his claim over the earth...

There are no more tears and sadness and anxiety over the direction the world is headed...

Jesus is King and he has the deed to the earth, and that leads to a joyful response in heaven...

The 24 elders and angels fall down at the feet of the Lamb in worship..

But John notices what they are holding as they fall before the Lamb...

They each have a harp and a bowl full of incense...

There are a number of thoughts about the harps...

Stringed instruments were a part of worship ever since Israel became a nation...

Many of the psalms were to be sung accompanied by a harp...

It is also interesting to note that harps were often played as prophecy was given...

Though we don't have time to turn there...

When Saul became the first king of Israel, some of the prophets of God came to him with prophecy from God and they were playing harps as they came....

There seems to be the idea of a harp associated with truth and prophecy...

Maybe hard truths go into the ear easier when accompanied by stringed instruments like harps...

It seems that Jesus coming to take the deed to the earth and preparing to pour out wrath upon those on earth who have rejected him is hard to accept...

But nonetheless, it is music to the saints ears...

The elders and angels worship with a harp because the Lamb is fulfilling prophecy as he takes the scroll from the Lord...

These creatures also have golden bowls of incense...

Incense was often used in temple worship to symbolize the prayers of the priests rising up to God in heaven..

And we don't have to guess that is what the incense represents here because John tells us that the bowls of incense are the prayers of the saints...

Now, how are these events compared to the prayers of the saints?

Well, haven't you ever prayed for God to come and make this world right?

Haven't you ever seen some of the tragedy and heartbreak of the earth and thought, "God, please come and rescue us from such sorrow and hurt?"

Haven't you ever wanted Jesus to return and crush the unjust and reward the just?

Sure you have and so have I..

If you have ever prayed the Lord's prayer, you have prayed for this day...

Matthew 6:9-13

9 “Pray, then, in this way:

**‘Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.**

10

‘Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

11

‘Give us this day [e]our daily bread.

12

**‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our
debtors.**

13

**‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from
[f]evil. [g][For Yours is the kingdom and the power and
the glory forever. Amen.]’**

When you pray verse 10, you are praying for Jesus to come and bring the kingdom of God to heaven, and make earth like it is in heaven...

What you see in Revelation 5 is the beginning of that prayer being answered...

Earth is about to become like heaven..

Jesus is preparing to take it back, rid it off evil, and establish the kingdom on earth...

And that part of the Lord's prayer and other prayers like it fill the golden bowls that the elders hold in their hands here...

When you pray for God to bring his righteousness to earth and take back over this world..

That prayer goes in a golden bowl to be poured out as Jesus prepares to bring forth his kingdom right here in Revelation 5...

That is a glorious thought and a prayer that I need to add to my prayer time daily...

Jesus, come and recapture this earth. Rid it of those who hate and reject you. Take your seat on the earth's throne and make this planet like heaven on earth once for all...

And so these elders and creatures worship with harps and pour out the prayers of the saints...

But then the elders break out in song...

Verse 9 and 10...

***9 And they *sang a new song, saying,
 “Worthy are You to take the [j]book and to break its
 seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with
 Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people
 and nation.***

***10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to
 our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”***

These elders break out in song here...

Its a new song in the sense that it is sung not with the
 thought of hope but of reality...

The elders, who remember are representatives of the
 church age, aren't singing in hopes that Jesus will
 come...

They are now singing with the thought that he is
 coming...

And they about his worthiness...

Worthy are you Lord to take the book and break the
 seals...

There is no feeling like the feeling or worthiness, right?

People wan to feel needed and helpful..

They want to sense their usefulness...

Not in a prideful way, but in a way that shows their value to God...

It's good to feel your worth to your family as a father who works to provide for your wife and kids...

It's good to feel your worth at church in filling a role of service to the Lord's people...

Jesus has worth.

His value is immense to the plan of God...

He is the only one capable of taking the title deed to the earth and ruling over it...

But what gave Him his worth to the elders?

You see it in the middle of verse 9...

His blood purchased people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation...

For the elders, for the church, Jesus has worth because Jesus' sacrifice was the only reason they were there in heaven...

And you need to always remember that the cross was a transaction....

Jesus' blood was payment for the sins of the saints...

He bought their freedom from sin with his blood..

So many people lose sight of what happened at the cross...

In very real terms to our day, Jesus walked in the God's cash register and laid down his money to purchase your freedom...

IF you have ever made a purchase for someone else...

Bought their lunch in the drive through, paid for someone else's product...

You get the idea...

We were broke in our ability to pay God for our sins because the only payment for sin is death...

Yet, Jesus died for us and we get to live through his substitutionary death....

Jesus became our substitute as his blood was spilt and not our and we walk by God's cash register not owning a dime...

But not only did Jesus do that to save these elders, he also went a step further...

Verse 10...

They were made to be a kingdom of God and priests to God, and they were promised to reign with Christ after he he rids the world of evil through the tribulation...

This is where you better squash the idea of eternity being a cloud and a harp...

Believers will not be without purpose in heaven...

We will be reigning with Christ in His kingdom...

And we will have access to God as priests...

Kingdoms don't run by people sitting around playing musical instruments on clouds...

Kingdoms function as people carry out their tasks...

The elders rejoice because they are there by the blood of Christ, and they worship because Jesus had given them a place in His Kingdom and access to God as priests...

So, they sing...

Now, we are about to finish up chapter 5 in verses 11-14 as John records what the rest of heaven is doing and saying...

But I want you to notice something here, and I don't want to make a big deal of it...

But the only group singing in heaven are the elders...

For the rest of the chapter, the angels and even the animals are going to worship and speak as well...

But each time, John records their words, he uses a different word....

He uses the word for speak or say...

Only the elders are described as singing...

Now, why would that be?

Well, they are the only ones in God's creation that experience salvation....

Angels aren't in need of salvation....

Animals and other parts of creation aren't saved from sin...

Only the elders...

Only people...

Only believers know what it is like to be saved from the clutches of sin...

And salvation makes you sing...

IT creates an emotion in you like no other truth in your life...

That is what it boggles my mind how people can come in a church, call themselves believers and never sing a note to God....

If anyone in the world has a song to sing, it the people of God who have been redeemed from sin...

So, the elders sing, but don't miss what the angels and all the other created things say...

Verse 11...

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

This is the universe expressing its praise to God...

This is the created order seeing the worth and value of Jesus Christ....

I want you to look at ***Romans 8:18-22*** for a minute...

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. 19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, [i]n hope 21 that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

All of creation suffers under the weigh of sin, and it awaits the freedom of being out from under the weight of sin...

Creation longs to be freed from its fallen nature and return to the peace of the garden of Eden...

And as the return in now set into motion...

Every created thing in verse 13 gives glory to Christ who has authority to take ownership of the earth and return in to its former glory...

So all of creation speaks praises to the Lamb...

And the living creatures continue in a chorus of Amens while the elders worship...

Conclusion

Let's finish up chapter 5 with a couple things to take home with us from this incredible scene in heaven...

The first principle is a review from last week but it bears repeating...

#1 - There is a world beyond your eyes.

Far too often, people of earth think that this life and this earth is all there is, yet that is a flawed view...

There is a world beyond, and it isn't a world filled with alien...

It is a world filled with the glory of God...

And I said last week, the only way to be a part of that world is to reject this world and follow Christ...

IF you love this world, this world is as close as you will get heaven ...

IF you live with the reality that there is more than this world, you will be carried to that world one day...

#2 - There is only one worthy One.

When the call went throughout heaven looking for someone worthy to take the scroll from the hand of God, no one answered the call but one..

No other religious leader came forward.

The only one deemed worthy to open the deed to this earth was Jesus Christ...

He is only way to salvation..

He is the only one worthy to return the earth to its former glory..

He is the only entrance into God's kingdom...

When it comes time to end the as we know it, he is the only one who earned the right to do it..

#3 - There is opportunity today.

Next week in chapter 6, God's wrath is unleashed on the earth and we will get a front row seat for the 7 year tribulation...

We will watch as large segments of the world's population perish...

We will watch as the trees are leveled and the green grass is burned up..

We will watch as all the freshwater on earth gets contaminated.

We will watch as famine strikes the whole world...

And what we see in chapters 6-19 will be as sure as the chair you are sitting on now..

But the grace and mercy of God is that you are now aware of that...

We hate it when people ruin a good ending for us, but the Bible is going to give you the worst ending imaginable and it is going to be the biggest blessing of your life...

Look, you dont want to hang around to see how this world ends...

The only safe place will not be here but in heaven...

God is going to give us 14 chapters with reasons not to be here out of his grace and mercy...

Why would you choose to take the chance of experiencing hell on earth when you assure yourself today of a seat in heaven?

Repent of your sins and trust in Christ to save you..

Give up this world because you know that there is world beyond...

Give up your sin to the by trusting in the One who used his blood to pay your debt for sin...

Let us pray.