

of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof. 6 And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came, and he taketh it out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sing a new song, saying,

Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, 10 and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.

Initial Questions 5:1-10

1. In the World of the New Testament, what was the place of a seal on official documents - vs. 1?
2. What were the requirements which must be fulfilled before one would have been worthy to "open the book and loose the seals thereof"? The highest expression of manhood was unworthy!
3. Do these messianic titles (e.g., the Lion - that is of the tribe of Judah, Root of David) relate the Kingdom come through Christ with the Old Testament prophecies of the Messianic Kingdom?
4. What symbolism does the "Lamb standing as though it had been slain" call to mind - vs. 6? (e.g., sacrifice, atonement, etc.)
5. What view of the person of Christ is implied in His accepting the worship and praise of creatures - vss. 9-10?
6. What were the results of Christ's work mentioned in vss. 9-10?

The Sealed Book and The Lamb

Chp. 5:1-14

5:1-10

Verse 1

John's vision continues—"And I saw (*eidon* - aorist. - in a single act John saw) upon (*epi*) the right hand (hand - not

in text) of the one sitting upon the Throne a scroll having been written within and on the reverse side, having been sealed (katesphragismenon - perf. pass. part. - the prefixed preposition *kata* means sealed down) with seven seals." The seals signified the authentication marks of the document. Charles says that "a will in Roman law bore the seven seals of seven witnesses." He was an expert in the background sources of the Apocalypse. The imagery would have been meaningful to every literate person in the New Testament world.

The book that John saw is the title deed to earth. The book contained the judgments of the living God as represented in the seven seals of trumpets, and the seven vials of wrath." These judgments are essential in order to bring the earth under the control of the Lord of the universe. When the call to open the book is made public by "a strong angel proclaiming in a loud voice"; no one is found able, but the Root of David. The angel continued to proclaim (*kerussouta* - present parti. - continually proclaimed) and after extensive inquiry no one was found "who is worthy to open the scroll and to loosen the seals of it?"

Verse 3

"----- no one was able (*edunato* - imperfect) in the heaven nor on the earth nor underneath the earth to open the scroll nor to look at it." The entire universe declines the challenge! No man nor angel was found who could respond to heaven's challenge. Why? What were the requirements?

Verse 4

"And I kept on weeping much - (*eklaion polu* - perf. act. plus *polu* - this weeping was so audible that one of Elders kept speaking much to me.

Verse 5

"And one out of the Elders says to me: Stop weeping (*mē klaie* - neg. plus present imperative). Look here (behold)—The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David overcame" (*enikesen* - 1st aor. act. ind. - the victory was won in a single act, not in a process - overcame by one act! the root verb is *nike* - victory). The 1901 translates "hath overcome" and thus does not show the singularity of the victory act," "to open the scroll and the seven seals of it." The only one worthy was also the only one able to open the seals, the Son of God, the rightful sovereign of the universe. Who was able?

The Messiah, a descendant of Judah and David (Genesis 49:9; Jeremiah 23:5; Matthew 1:17; Luke 3:31; Acts 2:30; Matthew 22:41-45) won the victory once and for all on the Cross. (See Isaiah 11 for the prophecy about the shoot of Jesse.)

Verse 6

Here we are taken to the very center of the Throne room. "And I saw in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the Elders a Lamb standing (*hestekos* - perfect participle) as having been slain (*esphagmenon* - perfect passive participle - this verb suggests violence and also sacrifice, both are involved in the cross and the atonement) having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God having been sent forth into all the earth." Here we notice the paradoxical imagery of a slaughtered Lamb, yet, standing. The great fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is without question in the background. The Book of Acts (8:32) identifies this Lamb as Jesus Christ. (See Edward Young, *Studies in Isaiah*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1954, chp. 4 "Of Whom Speaketh the Prophet This? pp. 103-125).

Verse 7

"And he came (*elthen* - 2 aor. indicative - the single act - came) and has taken (*eilēphen* - perfect tense) out of the right (hand - not in text, but implied) of the one sitting upon the throne." Christ came and has taken the scroll from the hand of the Father. His work on the Cross and the empty tomb has qualified Him to open the seals of doom which are about to be hurled upon the earth.

Verse 8

"When he (Christ) took (*elaben* - 2 aor. active - single act - took) the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four Elders fell (*epeson* - 1st aor. ind. act. - fall instantaneously, those closest to the one sitting on the throne fell quickest) before (in front of) the Lamb," in an act of worshipful surrender those surrounding the Throne acknowledged the deity of The Lamb, "each one having a harp and golden bowls (plural) being full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." The *kithapa* (harp) probably signifies a lute or guitar.

Verse 9

"They keep on singing (*adousin* - present tense) a new song saying: Worthy art thou to receive the scroll and to open the seals of it, because thou wast slain (*esphagēs* - 2 aor. passive) and didst purchase (*egorasas* - 1 aor. ind. act., through the act of being slain Christ did purchase by a single act) to God by thy blood out of every tribe, and tongue, and people and nation." Here we see the clear and categorical assertion of the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. Alien sinners can be restored to God, but only by acknowledging the Lordship of Christ. Forgiveness of sin is available only in Him. This fact makes missions and evangelism imperative!

Note: See the appendix and *The Lamb and His Blood in the Revelation* immediately following this chapter. For an excellent study on the vocabulary of redemption see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of The Cross*, Eerdmans, 1956—terms analyzed—Redemption, Covenant, The Blood, Propitiation, Reconciliation, and Justification.

Verse 10

What was the result of Christ's work? See 1:6 for discussion of "kingdom" and "priests" and "they will reign."

SECTION 14

Text 5:11-14

11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 saying with a great voice,

Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

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

Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

14 And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.

Initial Question 5:11-14

1. Does the contrast between "every created thing" in vs. 13 and--unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever" clearly state the deity of Christ?

A New Segment of the Vision
Chp 5:11-14

Verse 11

John not only "saw" but declares "I heard a sound of many angels round the throne and the living creatures and the Elders, and the number of them was (*en* - imperfect) ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands." An untold number of worshippers surrounded the Throne. They expressed the thrill of the presence of God by drawing deep into their spiritual reservoir and continually sing the praises of God. The ability to sing God's eternal praises is one of the acid tests of real spiritual concern in our own Christian lives today. Oh, the durth of great Christian music in our age! Why?

Verse 12

In one united voice they shouted "worthy is the Lamb"--see 5:6. The victory of the Lamb in overcoming sin, hell, and the grave won for Him "the power." Power can be forgiving or taking. Christ's power is for giving eternal life or that which no man can attain for himself. Though there is only one article for all the characteristics mentioned, I agree with Vincent that the "one article includes all the particulars, as if they formed but one word." Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. IV, p. 492.

The next thing Christ receives is "the riches." II Cor. 8:9 "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Christ is worthy to receive all the riches of glory for His work of redemption. The others of the "seven excellencies" are wisdom, strength, and honour, and glory, and blessings. These last glorious attributes are added beyond the great praise to the Lamb by the Elders, etc., in 4:11. The doxology which is offered to the Lamb is more exhaustive than the doxology to the creator in the concluding verse of chapter four. No one could compare these great doxologists without concluding that there is

no other single place in scripture where the deity of Jesus Christ is more emphatically declared.

Verse 13

Now the whole universe is marshalled together to sing His praises. Here we see a marvelous affirmation of the deity of The Lamb. In chapter 4:8-11 we noted how the "living creatures" worshipped "the one sitting on the throne." Now we see a clear act of worship which is received by one other than the Father. Who is it? John heard them "saying: To the one sitting on the Throne and to the Lamb the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the might unto the ages of the ages." No angel ever accepted worship in the biblical records (see 19:10 - where the angel refused worship) contrary to the claim of Jehovah's Witnesses Theology. Jesus is never called an angel in the apocalypse, or any place else. (Some identify Jesus with the angel of Yahwah in the Old Testament, but we cannot enter that discussion here. This thesis cannot be exegetically established). The characteristic attributed to the Father (chp. 4) are here attributed to The Lamb!

Verse 14

The four living creatures said *amen* to the praises of members of the universe, i.e., creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and now the occupants of the Throne room of heaven says *amen* to these glorious words of praise. "And the elders fell (*epasan* - 1st. aor. ind. fall in a single act.) and worshipped (*prosekunesan* - 1 aor. ind. - worshipped in a single act). The worship of the Lamb (chp. 5:8-14) is composed of three songs: (1) The Song of Creation (4:9-11); (2) The Song of Redemption (5:8-10) and (3) The Song of the Universal Chorus (5:11-14).

Note: See the Special Studies for sermon suggestions on the biblical doctrine of worship, and a sketch of an outline for a sermon series.

Review Questions

Chp. 5:1-14

1. What was the significance of seals in Roman Law - vs.1?
2. Who was found in vs. 2 that was able to open the seals?
3. How did John respond to the failure to find one who was worthy to open the seals - vs. 4?

4. One was found worthy and able. What messianic terms were used to describe Him - vs. 5? Read the O.T. passages given. Discuss.
5. From what vantage point does John receive the vision mentioned in vs. 6?
6. What is the Lamb of Isaiah 53? Where in the N.T. is He identified - vs. 6?
7. Why was the Lamb worthy according to vs. 9?
8. Who is found worshipping the Lamb according to vs. 13?
9. Read and discuss the content of the three songs said to the Lamb - vs. 14!

Biblical Theology of Worship

Why Go To Church?

When You Go, Do You Find?

- I. Anticipation of receiving something by preparation?
- II. Participation versus the religious observer?
- III. Spiritual Satisfaction?

Conclusion: Why Do *You* Go To Church?

Recovering The Thrill of Worship

At least these five elements are present in the biblical doctrine of worship.

- I. Recollection: The Church exists and we are saved, because of something God in Christ has done. (The events of the Gospel).
- II. Recollection generates Thanksgiving.
- III. This necessitates that we Participate by being spiritually mature enough to accept the forgiveness of Christ.
- IV. Real Participation means that we are also engaged in Proclamation.
- V. Proclamation genders expectation (and vice versa).

Conclusion: James S. Stewart of Scotland, the greatest preacher who uses the English tongue said of the American Churches—"they seemed to have lost the original spark or thrill of worship."

Do We Leave as We Entered?

Introduction: We go into the House of God troubled or burdened! How do we come out?

- I. Act of Reverence.
- II. Act of Fellowship.
- III. Act of Dedication.
- IV. Act of Renewal

Conclusion: If we seriously examined our worship life as Christians, what would we find out about our real relationship to Jesus Christ?

Special Study

The Biblical Doctrine of Worship

is much broader than a few hours each week being set aside for corporate worship. Archaeological evidence is irrefutable that Church buildings were a later innovation. Many people have the false notion that an hour or two on the Lord's Day exhausts the biblical requirements of worship.

- I. The Place of Worship.
- II. The Times of Worship.
- III. The Content of Worship.

Excellent insight can also be gained by studying the vocabulary, both Old and New Testaments, which are translated singularly by our English word - worship. It is highly improbable that one English term can adequately translate several words from either the Hebrew Old Testament or the Greek New Testament.

Outline

Seminar: Biblical Theology of Worship

Introduction: Hebrew and Greek Vocabulary of Worship.

- I. Antecedents to Old Testament Concept of Worship. Worship among Neighbors of Israel.
- II. Worship in Historical Perspective: Worship in Various Periods of Old Testament History.
 1. Law - Genesis, chapter 1-11
Genesis, chapter 12ff.
Pentateuch
 2. Historical Books In Promised Land - Joshua - Judges
- Ruth
 3. Prophets - Worship
 - a. True Worship
 - b. False Worship

4. Wisdom - Wisdom Literature - Worship
- III. Post Old Testament Literature and Worship
Intertestamental Literature and Worship
- IV. Antecedent Worship Concepts of New Testament Period in environment
 - Greek
 - Hebraic—Judaism
 - Roman
- V. Worship in The Gospel Records and New Testament Proper
 1. Synoptics - Matthew, Mark, Luke
 2. John
 3. Acts
 4. Epistles - Pauline
 5. Epistles - Johannine
 6. Epistles - General Epistles
 7. Hebrews - Revelation

Theological Vocabulary of Worship: O.T. and N.T.

Vocabulary - Multiple Hebrew Vocabulary - One English Word -
Worship

1. Persons
2. Places
3. Ceremony
4. Personal/Corporate Worship
5. Revelation - Worship
6. Worship and The Word
7. Worship and Holy Spirit
8. Worship and Spiritual Preparation
9. Worship and Spiritual Maturation
10. Necessary and Sufficient Aspects of Worship
11. Worship as an Activity: Intentionality of the Participants
(Behaviorism and Activity): A Real Human Act or Mere
Activity and Worship.
12. Worship and Biblical Doctrine of Unity
13. Preaching and Worship
14. Teaching and Worship
15. Baal Worship - Hosea
16. Vocabulary - Idol, Image - types of graven, carved
Grove
High Place
17. The Ten Words and Idols - Deut. 5: Ex. 20:
18. Jewish Architecture
19. Roman Catholic Translation of Decalogue

Latin

Trent on Idolatry

Aquinas

Catholic Use of Idols

20. Standard Denominational Churches
21. Free Churches
22. Worship in The Protestant Creeds
23. Ecumenical Theology Worship
 - A. Ministry
 - B. Sacraments
24. Conscience - Worship - Offense, Offended, Offender
 - I Cor. 8 - Romans 14: - Commands, Imperative moods
 - More than one conscience involved!
25. O.T. Prophecies of worship in the Messianic Kingdom and Dispensationalism's Hermeneutics
26. Use of Matthew
 - Literal fulfillment - return to O.T. Sacrificial system, Temple, etc.
27. Cornelius - Acts 2
 - Acts 10
 - Synagogue - Paul in Acts
 - Paul's consistency and synagogue participation
28. Criterion and Method for determine the Essential from the non-essential Aspects of Biblical Christianity.
29. What is universal, necessary, sufficient for Christian Worship!
 - A. Commands
 - B. Examples Same also for Restoring N.T. Church, e.g.
 - C. Expediency Imperative form e.g., Acts 2:38
30. Worship and Biblical Doctrine of Truth
 - emunah* means truth, faith, trust
 - Re: Worship in Spirit and Truth
31. The Biblical concept of worship and the problem of non-Christian concepts of worship and the problem of missions.

Brief Annotated Bibliography on Worship

Ilion T. Jones, *A Historical Approach to Evangelical Worship*, Abingdon, Nashville, 1954. Good, basic work giving historical perspective.

N. Micklem, editor, *Christian Worship*, Oxford, reprinted, 1954. Made up of 15 articles divided into 3 basic sections: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Studies.

Louis M. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, SPCL Press, London, 5th edition, 1956. Covers the Latin (Western) Liturgy to the time of Charlemagne.

Interpreter's Dictionary of The Bible, Article on Worship, Vol. 4, pp. 879-90, Abingdon, Nashville, 1962. This Dictionary was written by scholars who do not accept the Scriptures as the very Word of God, but this article is very good and has bibliography.

Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 15, pp. 710-713. Robert Appleton Co., N.Y., 1912. Official R. C. position with bibliography.

Consult any major Bible Dictionaries such as *Hastings, 20th Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*; also consult the *Jewish Encyclopedia* for article on worship. There is a vast literature on Worship but there is no competent work on the biblical doctrine worship, especially the N.T. doctrine. We hope and pray this gap will be filled by one committed to Biblical Christianity.

Special Study

The Lamb and His Blood in The Revelation Chapters 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11

The word blood occurs in the following four passages:

- Chapter 1:5 - "*en tō haimati autou*" - "by his blood."
 Chapter 5:9 - "*hoti esphagēs kai ēgorosas tō theō en tō haimati son*" - "because thou wast slain and didst purchase to God by thy blood."
 Chapter 7:14 - "*en tō haimati tou arniou*" - "in the blood of the Lamb."
 Chapter 12:11 - "*dia to aima tou arniou*" - "because of the blood of the Lamb."

John the Baptizer addresses Jesus as the Lamb (*amnos* - the ordinary word for Lamb - John 1:29 and 36) or God, which taketh away the sin of the cosmos." C.H. Dodd denies that John could have had in mind the passover lamb, and the lamb of Isaiah 53:1ff. How Dr. Dodd came by this amazing information is not revealed in his work. For those interested in examining Jewish interpretation of Isaiah 53 see S.R. Driver, A. Neubauer, *The Fifty Third Chapter of Isaiah According to Jewish Interpreters*, volume I, *Texts*, ed. by Driver and Neubauer; Volume II, *Translation*, same as above, Oxford University Press, London, 1876-77.

In The Revelation the term *Lamb* is used of Christ twenty-eight times. The fundamental idea is always sacrificial. It is