

Who Jesus really is.

No. 6 **Jesus – the Lamb on the Throne**. Bible reading: Revelation 5:1-14.

There is some debate whether Revelation 1:1 entitles this book “the revelation of Jesus Christ” or “the revelation *from* Jesus Christ”. Translations vary. I think the meaning is found by taking both together. It is the way our Lord Jesus showed himself to John. It is **God’s view of Jesus** shared with us via John. Both of these statements make Revelation important, even essential, for us to meditate upon. Perhaps we don’t do it enough?

In chapter 4:1 John sees an open door in heaven. He is invited to come up and to see reality. In effect he is told to look away from his exile on Patmos; to look away from his own bodily weaknesses; to look away from his legitimate concern for all of the churches – whether persecuted by opponents or poisoned by false teachers. (Sometime, we should consider which does more damage: suffering by fire or scarring by false teaching).

We all do well from time to time, to look away from our immediate circumstances – from ourselves and our ministries – and to invest some time deliberately looking to our Lord Jesus himself.

What we are going to think about now happens after two things have already been shared. 4:1, “After this”. These two things set our context:

1. **The glory of the Lord**, 1:9-18. Glowing, dazzling, brilliant in appearance, God is speaking to man. Jesus, the reconciling redeemer has risen from the dead and is seen to be reigning on high.

2. **The state of the churches**, chapters 2 and 3. Fallen from their first love; accommodating false cultic figures and followers; too tolerant and unrepentant; thinking too highly of themselves; relegating Jesus to the outside or the edge of their lives. It is the same now as then. Churches are a mixture of pure and less pure Christianity. The weekly BBC TV Songs of Praise programme and the variety of statements on current issues by different church leaders testify to both the good and the bad.

“After (seeing) this”, 4:1, John is given an intensely awesome vision of heaven’s throne – thrones to be more exact, twenty five in all.

4:2-8 describe a shining, glistening, radiating, emanating quartz-like person on THE throne – red, yellow, brown, dark green when seen from different angles. The person sits inside a bright luminous green circular rainbow. On twenty-four adjacent thrones (probably representing twelve patriarchs from the Old Testament and twelve apostles from the New Testament) are crowned white-robed, holy beings called “elders”, verse 4. These are the ones who govern for THE ONE – who appears to be more than one – THE ONE who reigns from THE THRONE.

There is thunder to be heard, lightning to be seen, blazing lamps, the fire of purification and judgement reflected in a glass-like crystal clear sea – miraculously calm in view of the thunder. This is the stunning presence of God: the holy presence of the central Person in all of history . Immediately around THE ONE, WHO APPEARS MORE THAN ONE, ON THE THRONE are four other-worldly creatures.

John hears a loud chant. It must have been loud to be heard above the thunder! (The word “loud” – Greek megas – or something similar, comes some twenty-five times in Revelation including: 1:10; 5:2; 5:12; 6:1; 6:10; 7:2; 7:10; 8:13; 10:3; 12:10; 14:7; 14:9; 14:15; 14:18; 19:17; 21:3). The chant John hears I paraphrase as:

Holy, pure and set apart, is the ever able, always, God, 4:8.

This chant of objective statements of who God is, is genuine worship, verse 10. And it is worship worthy of the worthy one, which sadly not all “Christian worship” or “church worship” seems to be! Worship must be centred on God, not on me, nor on the leader nor the congregation. God alone is worthy.

Verse 10 describes prostrated praise which has two ingredients:

1. What you, God, have given us we give back to you.

Note the crowns in verse 10.

2. Everything is from you and for you, God. We restate your unchallengeable worthiness, verse 11. God, you have the glory. God, you have the honour. God, you have the power.

True worship centres on God. It is not, “I want, I feel, I think”.

It is “God, you are, God you do, God you must have”.

I notice that they are very economical and holistic in heaven because the scroll mentioned in 5:1 has writing on both sides! They don’t waste their resources! Interestingly, they don’t use computers either! (You can’t roll up a computer, and I don’t think it refers to the “scroll bar” on one)!

No-one can open the sealed parchment scroll except, verse 5: “The Lion of the tribe of Judah”, who is, verse 6, the “Lamb, ... slain”.

Let’s just let God speak as we survey the references in Revelation to the Lamb. Enjoy communion with Him as we do so. Worship Him. He is fully worth everything we can offer Him ... and so much more besides.

Thinking of Jesus the Lamb:

- 5:6, **“the Lamb” ... sacrificed ...now “standing** in the centre of the throne”. Central to heaven is the crucified and now risen Lord Jesus.
- 5:8, **they “fell down before the Lamb”. Jesus is worshipped by earth and heaven’s rulers.** Never mind apparent world powers! This is where reality happens. Let’s join in.
- 5:12, **“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive” the perfect seven plaudits!** Jesus, receive power. Jesus, receive wealth. Jesus, receive wisdom. Jesus, receive strength. Jesus, receive honour. Jesus, receive glory. Jesus, receive praise.
- 5:13, **“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb”. The Lamb on and by the throne is with God and is God.** He is one, who appears to be more than one. He is forever to be praised. He is completely different to anyone else we know.
- 6:1, **“The Lamb opened the first of the seven seals”.** In sovereign judgement Jesus acts, and he continues to do so, 6:3; 6:5; 6:7; 6:9; 6:12; 8:1. Absolute authority is his. We are absolutely accountable to him. What he releases happens. It is awesome.

- 6:16, **this judgement includes “the wrath of the Lamb!”**. It is an aspect of the purity of God. It is holy, judicial anger. It is self-controlled God-ness (*and that’s my made-up word!!*) in dealing with sin.
- 7:9, **a multinational assembly is called to stand “before the throne and in front of the Lamb”**. The participating audience is the biggest ever gathered. Beside this, the Olympics, the United Nations, the G7 or G8, the Organisation of African Unity, all fade into their rightful eternal insignificance.
- 7:10, **Jesus has all rights over salvation**. “Salvation belongs to our God ... and to the Lamb”. One, yet being more than one. He is the owner of salvation. Us being saved or lost is *His* decision.
- 7:14, **people praising Jesus are there, “washed ... in the blood of the Lamb”**. The only way into heaven is through this purifying act. Sometimes on earth visas are denied by governments to those who want to enter a country that is not their own. When it comes to entering heaven, God holds all of the visas and He grants them on the conditions He has stipulated.
- 7:17, **these folk fear nothing because “the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd”**. A shepherd cares for every need his flock may have. Each single sheep gets his attention. English farmers look after their new lambs especially in late winter, considering the weather for being outside, the possible diseases and predators, the food necessary. They spend their time and energy on this. But God cares so much more for his people.

- 12:11, **we are reminded of earth's battles – now ceased – and when people “overcame (Satan and his hosts) by the blood of the Lamb”**. We do not rely on human effort alone. We do not rely on human weapons. Blood is best! And Jesus' blood is far superior to all the rest!
- 13:8, “ **the book of life belonging to the Lamb**”. **Jesus owns the book of eternal life**. “The Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world”. Christians – saved ones – are part of God's forever plan. As eternity surrounds time, so God envelopes humankind. Big things are little to him. And little things are precious to him. God's plans will come to pass.
- 14:1, “**the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion**”. **Jesus has disciples who follow the Lamb, verse 4. They are the first of many millions**. Our Christian ancestors are already into eternity. Thank God for Christian tradition through which we have the gospel today. It is not found in a museum, but is found in many faithful men and women around the world.
- 14:10, **the Lamb is also a witness of the eternal fury of God**. “In the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb” God's wrath torments those who have gone with the devil. We must weep over this now for there are no tears in heaven! All people are sinners, but there are saved sinners and lost sinners. Those who remain lost are those who chose to rely on themselves. They are not willing to trust themselves to Jesus the Saviour.

- 15:3, **seven angels lead a massive choir singing “the song of the Lamb”**. Harp accompaniment is prescribed by the heavenly ethno music logician. Singing stories about Jesus is a great way of reaching lost people today, around Sudan’s nomadic campfires and elsewhere.
- 17:14, **those who “war against the Lamb” are overcome by the Lamb because he is Lord of lords and King of kings**. Jesus is always able, no matter who or what is against him. Those on his side enjoy his eternal protection.
- 19:7, **the “wedding of the Lamb” comes. Our Christianity is a love relationship which is building towards its consummation at that time**. In my country many of today’s weddings are devalued as people live together before getting married. It is a strange fact that *we must live with our Lord Jesus before this heavenly marriage supper comes!*
- 19:9 is one of seven beatitudes in Revelation, 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7; 22:14. Here it says, **“Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”**. **Blessed means truly happy.**
- 21:9, “the bride, the wife of the Lamb” is made up of the people of the new Jerusalem.
- 21:14, **there are memories of “the twelve (founding) apostles of the Lamb”**. No later apostles are the same as these. Christianity is built securely on its earliest foundation, the first friends of Jesus.
- 21:22, **“the Lamb” is the place and the person of worship**. There is no temple in heaven. The heavenly reality has replaced earth’s representation.

- 21:23, **“the Lamb is (heaven’s) lamp” the radiant shining of the glory of God.** From the exact representation of God’s being emanates his glorious glory.
- 21:27, another reminder that **“only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life” will be in heaven.** Born again Christians and those God gives them by their witness will all be there. It is worth risking our lives here on earth so that more Christian people will be able to enjoy real life there. No others will ever enter heaven. There is no alternative route.
- 22:1, the **“throne of the Lamb” is the source of the water of life. It is fruitful wherever it flows.** Like the Nile flood plain brings creative life to the desert through which it flows, so Jesus brings life to dry and thirsty souls. Drink of Him, and you’ll never thirst again except for more of Him.
- 22:3, **and in heaven we servants will still “serve” “ the Lamb”.** What we do now we will do for eternity, living in order that Jesus be praised.

I make that twenty-five glimpses of the Lamb we have had from scanning Revelation.

Revelation shows us that what God starts he also finishes. Revelation shows us that God wins! There is a mosque and Islamic school on the airport road in Khartoum, Sudan, which had an English sign up when I lived there. It read this:

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him, and in the hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost”.

Bible reading Christians will totally disagree!

Revelation 11:15, “The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever”.

Revelation 19:1, “Salvation and glory and power belong to our God”.

And remember where we began our study survey, Revelation 5:6,9. The slain Lamb is worthy – he has bought people for God from every tribe, language, people and nation on earth. And he has made them into both a kingdom and a priesthood.

God has used missionary endeavour. We imperfect people have an imperfect church, but always our perfect God works through it! Ultimately, Jesus has done it all. He is worthy of our worship 24/7, until our last breath on this earth takes us to the fresh air of heaven.

With that pure air we will continue to sing the praise of Jesus: the slain Lamb, now risen, and so, so, so worthy!

by Colin Salter.

Original message 23rd February 2005; this one revised 28th September 2007.
Part of a series: “Who Jesus really is”.