



REVELATION

Session 3

September 26, 2021

“The Throne and Seven Seals”

Revelation 4:1 – 7:17

BIG IDEA

Jesus is Lord of Lord and King of Kings. He sits on the heavenly throne and He alone is worthy of our praise and worship. He is able to open the scroll for He holds the future in His hand.

BIBLE CONVERSATION / GENERAL INFO

Over the last few sessions, we have been driving home a single point: that Jesus is who Revelation is all about! It is His story. We are merely beloved supporting actors in it. Why is this the case? It is because this is the proper perspective we are to have as we live our lives in faith. Yet, let's take this one step further. As we enter into God's story and take on a life induced by the wonder of that, we find out something that is fearfully and awesomely true. He is the king, and He sits on the eternal throne, and when we come face to face with that reality it results in astonishment and deep worship. This is exactly what chapters four and five are all about. This is what all of Revelation's intense imagery is meant to do. We get ushered into His grand scheme. God is inviting us to be amazed and awestruck and fall down in astonishment to worship Him.

In this session on the heavenly throne and the seven seals, we are ushered into the heavens with John and witness a spectacular **throne** of colors and lightning and thunder and with special creatures and elders and angels sounding it singing with everything they have. And at the very center, on this majestic throne, sits a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain. It is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who alone is worthy and deserving of our praise and worship. We were created for this very purpose. So, let your heart sing, and let your excitement build, all to the praise of Him who sits on the throne and who is able and worthy to open the scroll by breaking the seals.



This scroll in His hand is a picture of God’s sovereignty and plan for history. As He breaks the seals, we see horses get called out. First, a white one representing conquering leaders, next a red one representing bloodshed, then a black for economic misery, and finally a pale one representing death, famine, plague, and death. When the fifth seal is broken, we see the great cry of Christians for justice. When the sixth is broken, we see creation itself being undone, a common image in apocalyptic visions. Finally, when the seventh seal is broken, silence. Consider how many of our Christian brothers and sisters around the world experience these things every day.

Yet it is because Jesus was slain and overcame the grave and continues to reign from on high, that He can provide the context for us to live confidently in the present and future tribulation which we may receive. It is by looking to Him in worship and trusting that the future is in His hand, that we can live with hope and perseverance in the midst of our broken circumstances.

Question #1 Read Revelation 4:1-9 and 5:6-10 What is the focus and meaning here?
Hint: Focus = what is the center of attention? Meaning = what is this passage telling you to do? These are the questions you should ask when it comes to big ideas in the bible.

Question #2 When was the last time you can remember being overwhelmed with a sense of awe and wonder? Perhaps it’s a grand vista or sunset when that deep nerve of awe and wonder and astonishment is tapped. How is this a clue to the power of worship?

[The sad thing is the modern world has often made it hard to be astonished, hasn’t it?]

SERMON OVERVIEW

Often, we get so caught up in trying to see the trees that we miss the forest and all its beauty. It is all too easy for us to get sucked into the weeds about Revelation and all the symbols and imagery and how it all connects. Remember, however, that these symbols and images all serve to usher us into a place of awe and invite us into worship. **So, take another look at Jesus and worship Him.** We cannot stress this enough. Give Him glory and honor and thanks *in* all circumstances, not merely *because of* your circumstance. Worship will change you.

Our circumstances don’t always go the way we want them, and our world is broken and filled with suffering and hardship. Yet God is in control and He has a plan, so **we don’t have to fear**

the future for it is in God’s hands. So, weep not! Don’t give up hope while you go about your days in a broken and chaotic world. Don’t get so caught up in the tribulation you face; that all you see is your own microcosm of fears and failures and frustrations. Jesus holds in His hand the scroll, which many understand to be a symbol for “the story of life on earth”. The seals of the scroll that Christ opens are signs of what life is like in the last days. These are the days in which we live and in which the first Christians lived through.

Yet despite our world being subject to this state of constant tribulation, there is hope! See, God is the one who is sovereign over these seals. And He loves the world, and He calls us to Himself. In the ancient world, a seal of ownership was sometimes placed on those of the same household or tribal family. We see this very consoling image set against the backdrop of these chaotic seals and horses. We see God marking His own with His seal of ownership. This seal affords all those of His company: His power, acceptance, protection, support, provision, comfort, and approval.

Question #3 Read Revelation 7:3-4, 9-10, and 14-17. What do Christians get to look forward to? What strikes you as most compelling from these snippets of scripture?

Question #4 Who’s seal do you bear? This is a highly personal question, so take a quiet moment and deeply reflect on this. Journal about it or write here what you think.

OPTIONAL EXERCISE

Option 1	Option 2
Draw on a piece of paper the image we see in Revelation 4 and 5:11 and 7:9 Throne (in the center) Seven-fold Spirit (7 lamps) before the throne Four living creatures surround the throne Twenty-four Elders surround the throne Thousands of Angels surround the throne	Personal and/or Group Reflection questions: Why is it important that Jesus is on the throne of our lives? What else is fighting to be on the throne of your own life? What other things do you worship? What are you seeking after or aiming at? What threat causes you to worry or fear?

Multitudes that no one can count surround the throne.	On whose shoulders does the well-being of your world rest?
Does seeing the picture help it sink in better?	

PRAYER

- Intentionally Specific Prayer for this week:
Pray that we would worship God as those in heaven do. Ask God to fill you and those of your group with a deep sense of awe and wonder and astonishment about who God is and what He is up to.

Next Session: Revelation 8:1-11:19

DIGGING DEEPER	Read Habakkuk
<p>Read the OT oracle of Habakkuk. An “oracle” is a declaration or back and conversation with God usually around a big topic, like evil or suffering. As you read the three short chapters. Look for these key movements: What does Habakkuk ask? (1:2-4). What is God’s answer? (1:5). What is Habakkuk’s honest but abrupt follow-up retort? (2:12-13) What is God’s second response? (2:2-3). Lastly, what does Habakkuk do by the end of the exchange? (3:2-4, 3:16, 3:18).</p> <p>Habakkuk never receives an answer to his questions, but he does move from fearful inquirer to hopeful worshiper. How is this same movement exhibited in Revelation or your own inquiries?</p>	