



Sooke Baptist Church
Sunday, December 6, 2020

9am – Facebook Live Stream
Noon - YouTube

Look! A Lamb!
Revelation 5

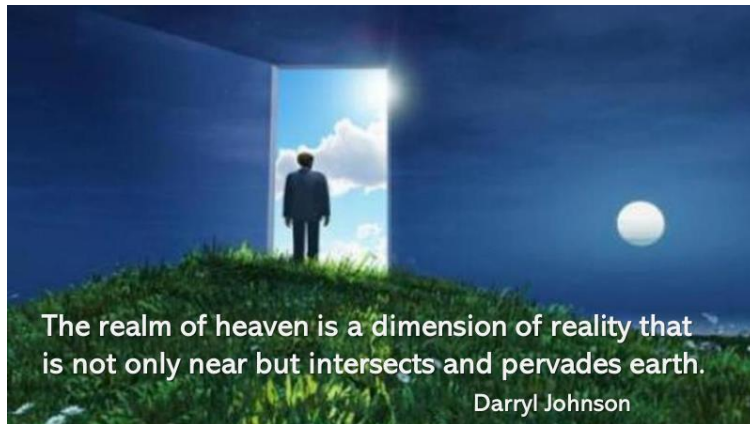
Coffee/question:
What have you seen
that completely altered
your outlook on life?



The apostle John stated in 4:1 that he saw a door standing open in heaven. The voice that had spoken to him in chapter 1, invited him... into the timeless presence of God.

In the Spirit, as 4:2 says, John was enabled to see a throne in heaven and the One who sat on it.

Revelation 4 reminds us that...



DJ, p.144.

In Revelation 5... John's sightline shifted.

Verse 1 says that he saw in the right hand of the One who sat on the throne... a scroll that had writing on both sides and was sealed with seven seals.



What was this scroll?

GK Beale believes it contained "God's plan of judgment and redemption in the period of time known as the last days, which had been set in motion by the death and resurrection of the Christ." p.111.

Darryl Johnson adds, "The scroll contained God's plan... for establishing his gracious rule **in the world**. A plan, which by necessity, involved judging all that is wrong..." p.144

I remind you of what Acts 17:31 says regarding the world's need of justice and the One who will carry it out:

"For God has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this by raising him from the dead."

Jesus is that man.

He has been appointed because he is the new head of the human race.

At the moment John saw the scroll, he also saw a mighty angel who asked in a loud voice...

Who is worthy?

"... to break the seals and open the scroll?"

This is a haunting question.

Who is worthy?

- The One on the Throne

The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders who worshiped the One on the throne, had declared in 4:11, **"You are worthy, our Lord and God."**

Why didn't the One on the throne break the seals and open the scroll?

What about the twenty-four elders?

Who is worthy?

- The One on the Throne
- The twenty-four elders

They were righteous and pure as evidenced by the white robes they wore. Placed on their heads were crowns of gold which represented their authority.

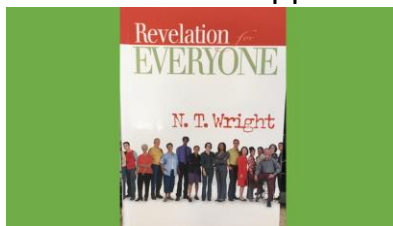
Why didn't they break the seals and open the scroll?

Who is worthy?

- The One on the Throne
- The twenty-four elders
- The four living creatures
- One of the mighty angels

The same could be asked of the four living creatures or of the mighty angels.

In order to capture the immense weight of this question... and its answer... and to be able to enter into the awe of the worship described in chapter 5, we must rehearse what happened in the beginning. Here I reference Tom Wright.



When God made all that is...he committed himself to **work within** his creation through....obedient humankind. But why???

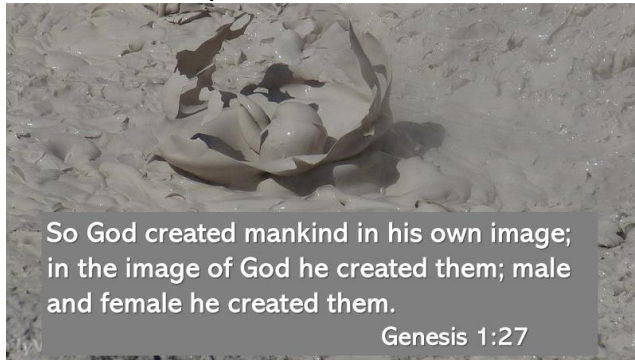
Job asked this question:



The psalmist asked a similar question.

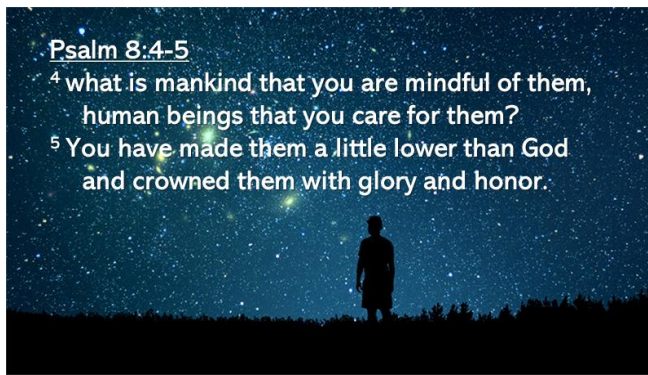


Genesis 1:27 provides the answer.



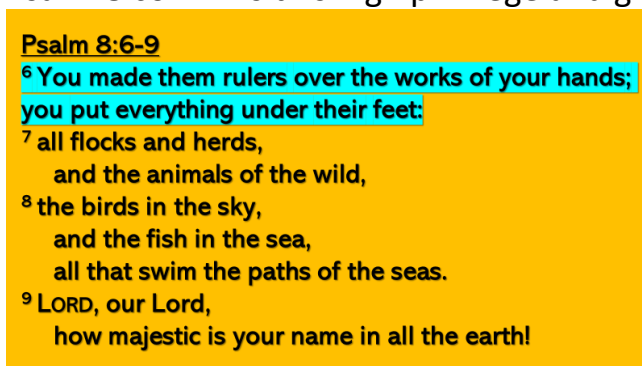
But what does that mean – to be made in the image of God?

Look at verse 5 of Psalm 8...



God gifted mankind with character, abilities and skills, so that, in God's own words, they might "rule over...every living creature...in the sea...in the air...and on the ground." See Genesis 1:28.

Psalm 8 confirms this high privilege and great responsibility.



Human beings were created to reign on the earth – to be stewards of the creation...to take care of the world and its creatures on God's behalf.

This was our high calling as image bearers!

But when our first parents turned from God... their disobedience and rebellion opened the door for sin and death... to enter and curse... human experience... and the creation and its creatures.

This is why the world in this present time, groans like a woman in childbirth.

All dysfunction is caused by sin.

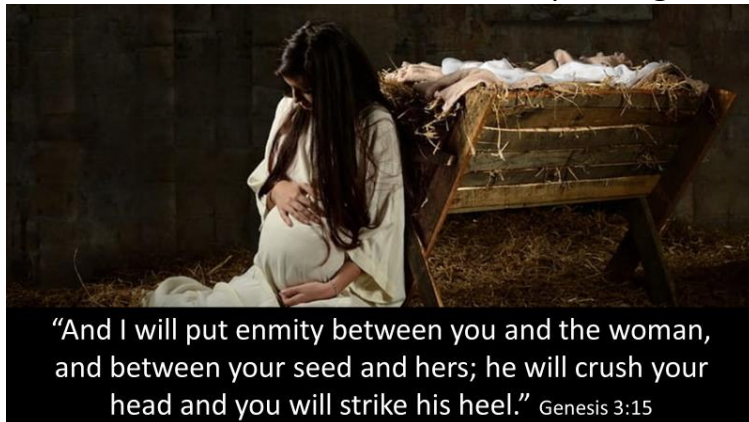
And if that wasn't enough...Adam and Eve's turning away from God gave opportunity for those angels who had been driven out of heaven because of their own moral rebellion... to enslave humankind through the fear of death.

See 2 Timothy 2:26.

The fallen angels were permitted to step into the vacuum left by Adam and Eve's abdication... and they are cruel tyrants.

However, before Adam and Eve were exiled from the garden of Eden, God promised a Rescuer would come from the offspring of the woman.

We must not miss this – God said...speaking to the serpent...



God's promised Rescuer... would be a child of the woman.

A male child of the woman would crush evil.

As the story of Rescue unfolded in the book of Genesis, God revealed that the Rescuer would be a descendant of a particular human family – the family of Abraham, and then later, that he would come from the lineage of one of Abraham's twelve great-grandsons, Judah, and still later, that he would be an offspring of King David.

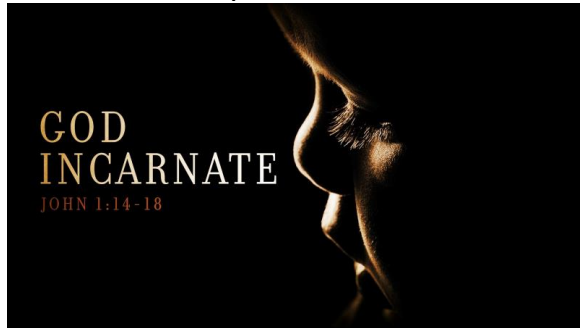
Even though it had been foretold by the prophet Micah, 5:2...

Micah 5:2

² “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
**whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”**

...that the origins of the Rescuer would be from of old...

...no one anticipated that...



... God the Son would become flesh and make his dwelling among us. John 1:14

Let's come back to our text.

The answer to the question of the mighty angel, was given in v.3:



... there was “No one in heaven... or on earth... or under the earth... who could open the scroll or look inside.”

This is what moved John to weep and to weep.



The fact that he did so... is meant to shock the reader.
Think of it...in the perfection of God's presence and home...John wept.
Why.... did he weep?

I need to say this again:

God has made the world
in such a way
that his plans for the world
must be executed
by a human being.

Tom Wright

p.52-53

Once crowned with glory and honor humanity is now covered in shame.
Once entrusted with authority from God to rule the earth on his behalf,
human beings now selfishly strive to rule over others, in an effort to build their
own fiefdoms.

How the human race has fallen!

This is why there was found no one worthy to open the scroll and look inside.
All have fallen short of the glory of God.
All have sinned.

This is why John wept.

But then...one of the 24 elders said to John:

v.5a. "Do not weep!"

v.5b. "See!" the elder said.

The word “see” is a command, carrying this sense... “Look!”
“Look at... the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David...”

These were titles which John knew.

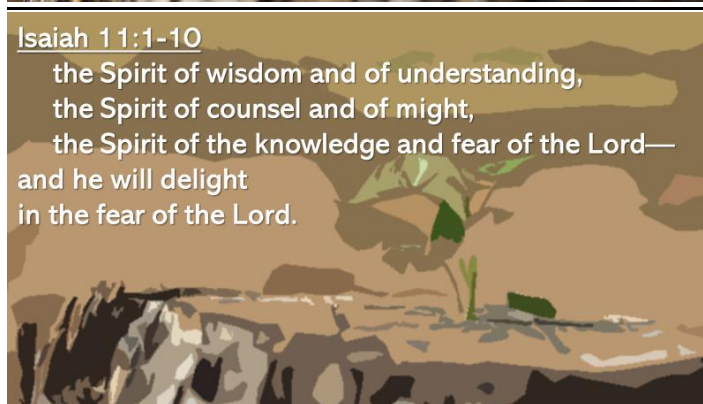
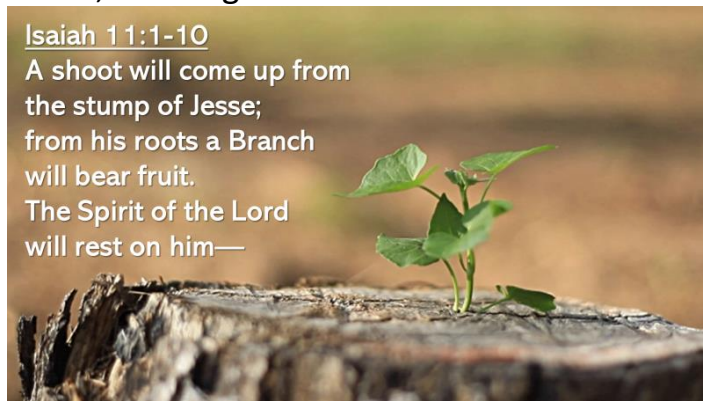
Jesus is a descendant of Abraham’s great-grandson, Judah.



Jesus is the earth’s rightful king...he is humanity’s new head.

Jesus is a descendant of King David who was a descendant of Judah.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God described humanity’s new head, the second Adam, our King.



Isaiah 11:1-10

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give
decisions for the poor of the earth.

Our King cannot be bribed; nor deceived.
He always acts justly.

Isaiah 11:1-10

He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash
around his waist.

Our King will deal with wrong.
What he does is always right.

Isaiah 11:1-10

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie
down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the
yearling together; and a little child will lead them.
The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

Our King will undo dysfunction.
He will bring to the earth the peace of God.

Isaiah 11:1-10

The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand
into the viper's nest.

They will neither harm
nor destroy on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with
the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.

Because of Jesus and through his rule, all things will live in harmony.
Through him the wholeness of God's person will pervade the creation.

Isaiah 11:1-10

In that day the Root of Jesse
will stand as a banner for the peoples;
the nations will rally to him,
and his resting place
will be glorious.

The Root of Jesse is the second Adam...he is the earth's true king.

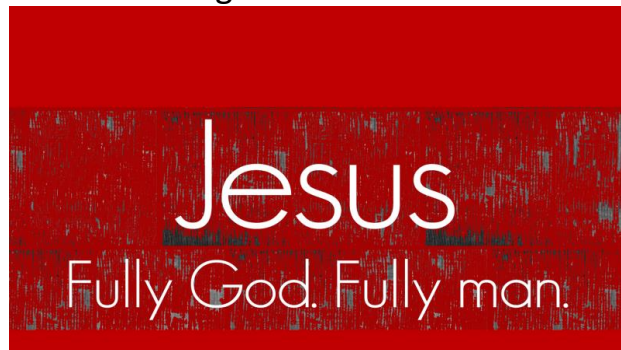
What the elder announced to John was good news:

v.5 - "The Lion of Judah, the Root of David...he has triumphed.

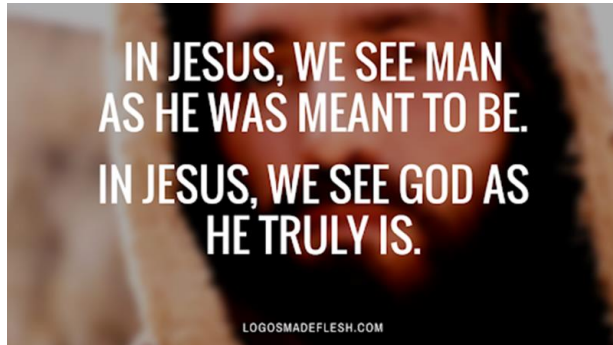
In his great wisdom, God has fulfilled the promise he had made in the garden of Eden... to the serpent...in the presence of Adam and Eve.

At just the right moment...in the fullness of time.... God's Rescuer had been born of a woman...whose name was Mary.

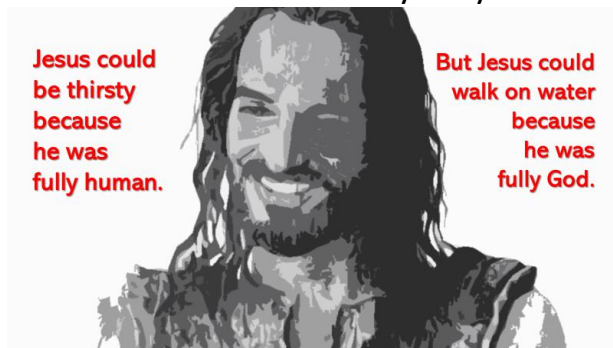
The child she gave birth to was called Jesus, which means **"Yahweh saves."**



Jesus, the Rescuer was fully human... and fully God.
God made the way when there was no way... no hope.

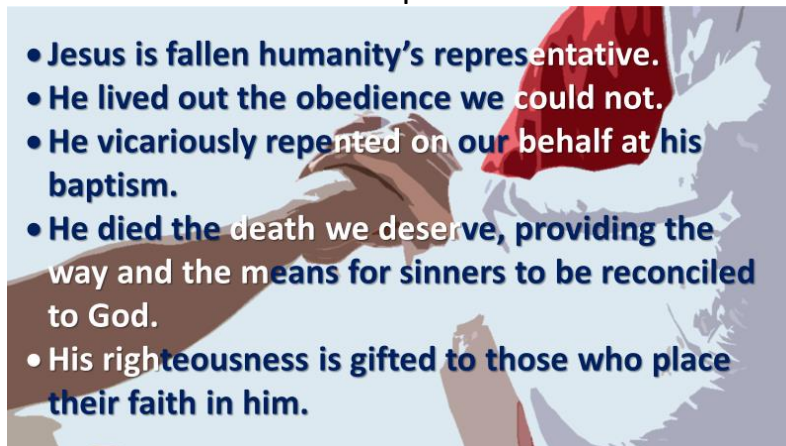


Here we encounter the mystery and the marvel of the Incarnation.



The good news announced by the elder was that there is a human who is worthy!
It is Jesus... the lion of Judah, the Root of David...the God-man...he is the second Adam.

In the words of Luke Stamp:



Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, in derision had said to the crowd who clamored for him to crucify Jesus,

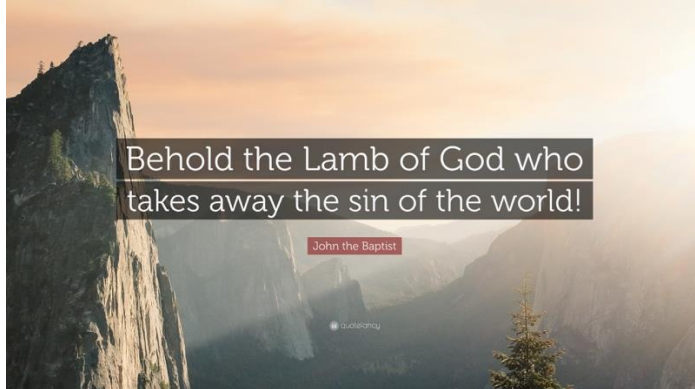
“Behold the Man!”



John 19:5

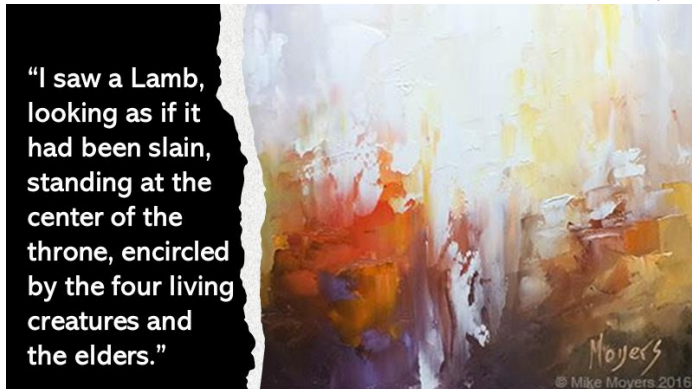
In essence, is this not what the elder told John to do... but in adoration?
“Behold the man...the Lion of Judah, the Root of David!”
He is the only One “able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

After his baptism, John the Baptist said this about Jesus...



John 1:29

When John turned to see the Lion of Judah, he ...



The apostle John did not just see a Lamb... but a Lamb looking as if it had been slain.

What did that mean?

Jesus still bears in his body the scars of his crucifixion.

Remember when he appeared to his disciples – Luke 24:40 – he showed them his hands and his feet.

Eugene Boring says,



Revelation, p.108.

Tom Wright says, “The Lion is the symbol of power and royalty...
...the Lamb... of vulnerability and weakness.

In the vision which John saw, the two were fused together, completely and forever.” Revelation, p.54.

Here again we encounter marvelous mystery!

Where was the Lion who is a Lamb standing?

v.6 –at the center of the throne.

What did that mean?

“The Lamb stands in the very center of the One who sits on the throne.”

DJ, p.147.

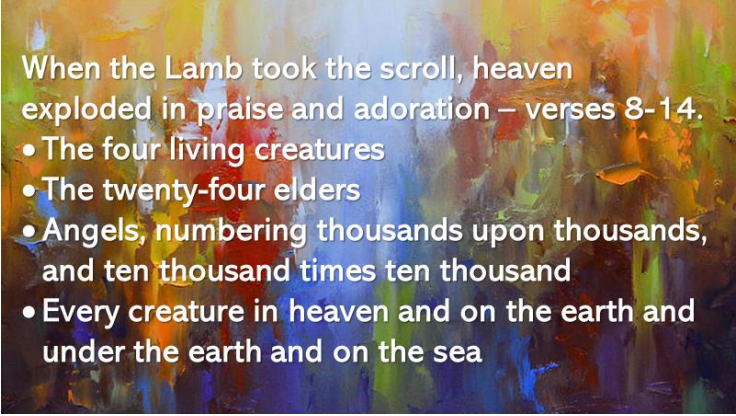
John further described the Lamb, in v.6, as having seven horns and seven eyes. Remember seven is the number of perfection... the number of completeness. Horns represent strength, and eyes... wisdom.

The Lamb looking as if it had been slain has all strength and wisdom because in him... is... the fulness of the Holy Spirit of God... the same Spirit whom the Father and the Son have sent out into the world, to inhabit the lives of Jesus followers.

DJ, p.147.

What did the Lamb who is worthy do?

v.7 – He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.



When the Lamb took the scroll, heaven exploded in praise and adoration – verses 8-14.

- The four living creatures
- The twenty-four elders
- Angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand
- Every creature in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea

v.9-10 – they all sang a new song.

Why a new song?

- Because... Jesus had been slain.
- Because... Jesus had purchased with his blood men and women from every tribe and language and people and nation.
- From Jesus comes a new kind of human being...no longer spiritually dead; no longer cursed; no longer self-focused... but a kingdom and priests to serve God.
- Because the redeemed will reign with him on the earth.

v.11-12 - As the angels joined in, singing in a loud voice, they too proclaimed the worthiness of the Lamb, who was slain.

v.13 – And then every creature sang...in grateful praise, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb! Amen!!!!

How does this passage connect to our lives?

1. The heart of God understands and feels what it is like for you and I to live in this world – for at the center of God’s being is the Lion who is the LAMB, who, in the words of Isaiah, was a man of sorrows, despised and rejected, acquainted with grief.

Never forget...remember always...the hands of the Lamb who took the scroll – are nail-scarred.

He experienced all that we experience...not a little, not some, not a lot...but all... and he overcame...he was victorious.

Dear follower of Jesus...in what you are living right now...look to the Lamb – his grace is your strength every moment of every day.

His grace searches for us and finds us.

His grace gifts us with faith to believe.

His grace pardons our sin.

His grace awakens our dead spirit and births in us a new nature.

His grace gifts us with the Holy Spirit, who makes his home in us.

His grace transforms us, day by day, hour by hour.

His grace sustains us, moment by moment.

The Lamb says to his followers, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” 2 Corinthians 12:9

The Lord would have you and I ponder these things and stretch out our empty hands to him that he might fill them with his grace.

This is the One who ever lives to intercede for you.

2. Revelation 4 and 5 teaches us that the greatest wisdom and the greatest power is that of sacrificial love as evidenced by the Lamb, when he willingly gave his life in sacrifice on a Roman cross. DJ, p.150; Beale, p.115.

The cross forever defines, not only the Lamb, but also his followers.

Remember what Jesus said – take up your cross and follow me.

3. The passage would ask of us – what fuels our hearts? What fills us with joy and awe? To look upon the scene of worship in Revelation 5... is to be taught that **this is the reality for which we are created - to worship God and to enjoy him forever.**

We can't miss it!

Those who worship the triune God, sing... in response to his majesty, love, mercy, wisdom and grace. Peterson, p.68

Five songs are sung in Revelation 4-5.

The songs of Revelation 4 are God saturated.

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

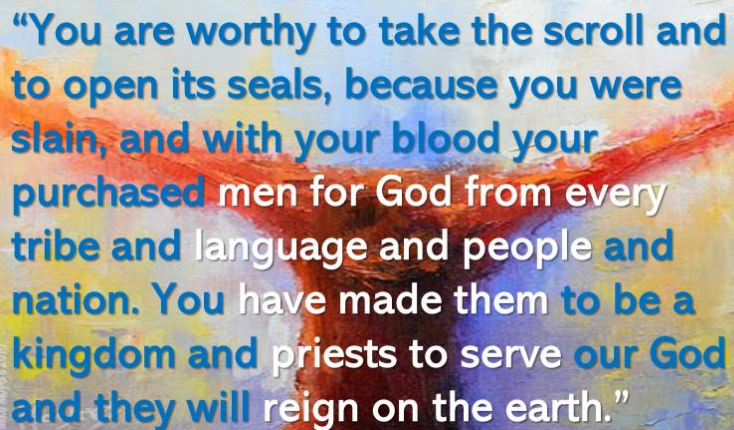
Heaven never tires of praising God’s holiness and eternity!

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

Heaven never tires of praising the Creator...who spoke things into existence! Who created beauty, design, order, and inter-connectedness.

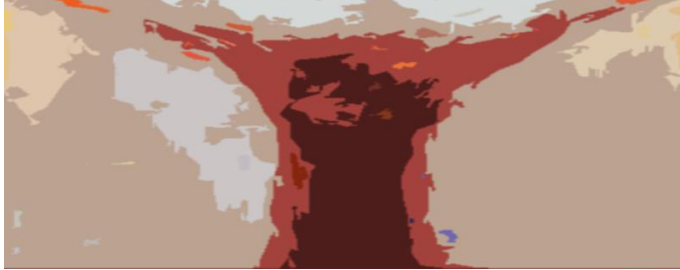
The songs of Revelation 5 are gospel-saturated.



“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God 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.”

The elders and the living creatures praise the Lamb for his glorious redemption of fallen humanity.

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”



In the words of Eugene Peterson, the worship of heaven is “robust and exuberant. There is nothing cowering, cautious, or timid about it.” p.69.

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”



When the church of Jesus worships, “heaven is introduced into the present...”
Peterson, p.70.

Every time the church gathers to worship, we join with heaven in the praise of the worthy One, and are “immersed in the joy of heaven and its splendors.”

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, that things are not as they seem!
Amen... is our response to the One on the throne and to the Lamb.