

GOSPEL COMMUNITY GUIDE

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

The Throne and the Lamb (Rev. 4-5) | January 11, 2026



QUICK UPDATES

Share any upcoming church events and handle housekeeping for the Gospel Community.

CONNECT

When you picture the throne room and the Lamb in Revelation 4–5, what stands out to you first? No need to explain why.

REVIEW

Have someone read the passage out loud from the ESV translation or something similar. Reflect on any insights, questions, or parts that stood out from the text or the sermon. Then read the summary below.

Revelation 4–5 lifts believers out of the confusion of the lower story and anchors them in the upper story, where God reigns on the throne in holiness and glory. John sees that history is not chaotic or abandoned but held in the hands of a sovereign and faithful God. The sealed scroll exposes the crisis of sin, suffering, and injustice - until the Lamb who was slain appears as the only one worthy to open it. Jesus guarantees the future of God's people. The proper response to this vision is worship, re-centered allegiance, and faithful endurance in the way of the Lamb.

LEARN & LIVE

These questions help us grasp the truth of the passage and consider how to live it out.

- What repeated imagery dominates Revelation 4–5, and what does it clearly communicate about who rules all things?
- How does the description of God's throne emphasize both His holiness and His covenant faithfulness (Rev. 4:2–3)?
- What actions do the twenty-four elders repeatedly take, and what do those actions teach us about worship (Rev. 4:10–11)?
- According to Revelation 4:8, what truth about God is proclaimed without ceasing, and why is that significant for suffering believers?
- In Revelation 5:1–4, why is the unopened scroll such a serious problem for John?
- What reason is given for the Lamb's worthiness to open the scroll (Rev. 5:9), and how is that reason tied directly to the gospel?
- How does Revelation 5 show that redemption is global in scope rather than limited to one people group?
- What change occurs in the worship between Revelation 4 and Revelation 5, and what does that reveal about Jesus' role in God's plan?
- Based on Revelation 4–5, how do you think believers are meant to live in the present while awaiting the future God has secured?

GO DEEPER

These questions invite us to slow down and wrestle with what's going on beneath the surface. Use these to go a little deeper or in your Huddle Groups.

- How does regularly remembering that God is on the throne reshape the way you respond to fear or uncertainty?
- What does John's emotional response in Revelation 5:4 teach us about the seriousness of evil and injustice in the world?
- Why is it comforting that the one who governs history bears the marks of sacrifice?
- How might worship re-center your heart when life feels dominated by the "lower story"?
- How does following the Lamb's way challenge common cultural ideas about winning or success?
- What does it look like to practice faithful endurance rather than quick escape from difficulty and suffering?
- How does knowing that your prayers are seen and valued by God shape the way you pray?
- In what ways does this vision of the future give hope for present suffering?
- What is one concrete way your life could more clearly reflect allegiance to the Lamb this week?
- **How is the Holy Spirit comforting you or challenging you personally from this discussion? How will you respond and what will you do differently this week? Is there anywhere you need help to make that happen?**

PRAY

- Pray about one way God spoke to you tonight through His Word.
- Pray by name for someone in your life who doesn't yet know Jesus.
- Pray for the needs of those in the group.
- Pray for this ministry area of Redeemer: [Pray for those within our church family who are experiencing suffering.](#)

5 GROUP DISCUSSION RULES

We want to be full of grace as we meet, deepening our relationship with one another and with Christ. These five values help us know our **P.L.A.C.E.** in our GC's and Huddles.

1. **Pray** - Prayer is a space for confession, struggle, and praise. Keep requests focused on yourself and your immediate family, so we can pray specifically and personally.
2. **Listen** - Be present and attentive. Share with humility, be mindful of time, and remember: silence is okay.
3. **Apply** - Answer honestly. Consider how God's Word speaks into your life, and what it might look like to respond.
4. **Confess** - Confession and repentance are signs of maturity. We meet one another with grace, not shame.
5. **Encourage** - Practical advice is helpful, but truth is better. Speak the gospel into each other's hearts and stories.

COMMENTARY EXCERPT:

The Heavenly Throne Room (4:1–11)

In Revelation 4, the prophet sees the sovereign God seated on heaven's throne. John's throne room vision alludes repeatedly to the OT Prophets (e.g., Isa 6:1–4; Ezek 1; Dan 7:9–10) and offers a foundational description of God Almighty's holiness, sovereignty, and worthiness to receive worship as the Creator, Ruler, and Sustainer of all things.

4:1 The "door standing open in heaven" parallels other biblical visions where heaven is opened (cf. Ezek 1:1; Matt 3:16; Acts 10:11; Rev 19:11). John hears "the first voice"—that of the risen Lord (1:10)—summon him and promise to reveal "what must take place after this." This reiterates Christ's words in 1:19 and again alludes to Daniel 2:28–29.

4:2–11 John's experience "in the Spirit" (4:2) introduces a major visionary unit and reinforces that he is a true prophet who receives genuine revelation from God. The divine throne is the central feature of John's vision; everything else is presented in relation to it. Before the throne are the seven Spirits (4:5; see comments on 1:4), the glassy sea (4:6), and the altar (8:3). Around the throne are a rainbow—the sign of God's covenant promise (cf. Gen 9:13–17)—twenty-four thrones, the elders, and the living creatures (4:3–4, 6). From the throne come lightning, rumblings, and thunder (4:5). And most importantly, on the throne sits God Almighty (4:2–3, 9–10), the supreme sovereign who created, sustains, and rules over all things (4:11). His bejeweled appearance signifies his brilliant glory (cf. 21:11).

The twenty-four elders occupy thrones surrounding the Almighty's throne and perpetually praise God and the Lamb (4:4, 10–11; cf. 5:8–10; 11:16; 19:4). Their white garments represent purity and holiness (cf. 3:5), while their golden crowns signify their high status and perhaps royalty. These elders may represent the full number of believers in heaven but most likely depict an order of exalted angels who continually worship and serve God around his throne. Twenty-four probably combines the twelve tribes of Israel with the twelve apostles (cf. 21:12; Matt 19:28), though it also parallels the number of priests serving in the temple (cf. 1Chr 24:4–19).

The lightning and thunder coming from the throne recalls God's awesome presence at Mount Sinai (4:5; Exod 19:16; 20:18). Revelation repeatedly mentions the sights and sounds of Sinai, including at the close of the seal, trumpet, and bowl judgment cycles (8:5; 11:19; 16:18). The sevenfold Spirit of God (4:5; see comments on 1:4) is pictured as seven burning torches before God's throne, alluding to the fiery theophanies in Ezekiel 1:13 and Exodus 19:18.

The sea of glass and four living creatures in 4:6 recall Ezekiel 1:5–14, 22, 26 (see Table: OT Background for Revelation 4). The living creatures are probably angelic beings nearest the heavenly throne who lead others in worship (4:8; 5:14) and initiate God's judgment (6:1). They resemble the noblest wild beast (lion), strongest domestic animal (ox), swiftest bird (eagle), and wisest creature—a human being made in God's image (4:7; cf. Ezek 1:10). Their six wings and song—"Holy, holy, holy" (4:8)—allude to the seraphim in Isaiah 6:2–3. These living creatures represent God's intended design for all creatures to give him glory as the omnipotent, eternal God. The elders respond to the living creatures' unceasing worship by casting their crowns before God's throne as an act of willing submission to God (4:10). They extol the Almighty as "worthy . . . to receive glory and honor and power" (4:11; cf. 7:12); this same praise is ascribed to the Lamb (5:12–13). "For" explains why the Almighty is worthy of worship: he created all things (cf. Ps 148:5).

The Worthy Lamb (5:1–14)

Chapter 4 sets the heavenly stage for the unfolding redemptive drama of chapter 5, as the slain Lamb is found worthy to take the sealed scroll from the sovereign God and share his praise.

5:1 John focuses attention on a mysterious "scroll" in the Almighty's hand, containing writing "within and on the back" and "sealed with seven seals." This scroll or "book" (NASB) recalls the double-sided scroll containing "words of lament and mourning and woe" in Ezekiel 2:9–10 and the sealed books in Isaiah 29:11 and Daniel 12:4. In the ancient world, important documents were sealed with wax to prove their authenticity and prevent tampering, and the number seven here and elsewhere in Revelation indicates fullness or completion. This scroll contains the Almighty's secret plans for salvation and judgment, which could only be disclosed and executed by God's "worthy" agent—the Lamb Jesus, who takes the scroll (5:7) and opens its seals (6:1–8:5).

5:2–5 The angel's question underscores the importance of the scroll and its inaccessibility, which prompts a futile search for someone able to reveal the sealed scroll's secrets. The lack of a worthy seal-breaker is a cosmic crisis that makes John weep like the OT prophets (e.g., Isa 22:4; Jer 9:1). Then one of the heavenly elders tells John to stop weeping because a noble champion has "conquered" and so can open the sealed scroll. The titles "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" and "the Root of David" recall OT prophecies of Judah's kingship (Gen 49:9–10) and the ideal Davidic ruler who would bring true justice and hope for the nations (Isa 11:1–4, 10).

5:6–7 What John sees reinterprets what he hears in 5:5: the longed-for regal Messiah is surprisingly a slain Lamb, who has conquered by self-sacrifice, not military might. This is the first of twenty-eight references to the "Lamb" in Revelation, the book's most frequent and distinctive Christological title. While other terms like "ruler" (1:5) and "Lion" (5:5) suggest a powerful warrior king who would slay the enemies of God's people, a Lamb is an image of innocence, vulnerability, and sacrifice. This evocative title may combine multiple OT sources: the Passover lamb (Exod 12:3–6; cf. John 1:29), the suffering servant (Isa 53:7; cf. Acts 8:32), and the rejected prophet (Jer 11:19; cf. Luke 11:50). But this is no ordinary Lamb; he has "seven horns" and "seven eyes." Horns in OT and early Jewish writings convey regal strength (see Dan 7:24; 8:21–22; Rev 17:12; 1 Enoch 90:9); thus, the Lamb's seven horns represent his perfect power. "Seven eyes," an allusion to Zechariah 4:10, signifies Christ's complete knowledge and insight as one endowed with "the seven spirits of God"—that is, the fullness of the Spirit that illuminates God's throne room like "seven torches of fire" (Rev 1:4; 4:5; cf. Zech 4:2, 6) and endows the Messiah (Isa 11:2 LXX). Thus, Jesus the Lamb has both divine sight and divine ability. He approaches the awesome throne and takes the scroll from the Almighty's hand (5:7), recalling Daniel 7:13–14 where one like a son of man approaches the Ancient of Days and receives an everlasting kingdom. Before the Lamb starts opening the sealed scroll in 6:1, the living creatures and heavenly elders (introduced in 4:4, 6) respond with reverent praise (5:8–10). The "golden bowls full of incense" in their hands represent the sweet-smelling "prayers" of God's people (see Ps 141:2; Luke 1:10), which are brought before the worthy Lamb. The Lord dramatically answers these petitions in the rest of the book (see 8:3–5 and 15:7–8).

5:8–10 Elsewhere in Scripture a "new song" extols God for his saving works (cf. 14:3; Pss 96:1–2; 144:9–10); here the new song praises the Lamb who alone is "worthy" to open the scroll, decisively answering the angel's question in 5:2. "For" (hoti) introduces the reason why the Lamb is the worthy seal-breaker: his sacrificial death purchased a multiethnic people for God (5:9). The Greek verb *agorazō* translated "ransomed" (ESV, NLT), "purchased" (NIV, CSB), or "redeemed" (KJV) is a commercial term often used for the emancipation of slaves (cf. 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23; Rev 14:3). The description of the redeemed in 5:9–10 alludes to Exodus 19:5–6, which celebrates Israel's election as God's special people "from all the peoples" and their vocation as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." But Revelation extends this description of Israel to God's universal people, who transcend ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and national boundaries; this "kingdom and priests" is saved by Christ and set apart for God's service (cf. 1:6; 22:5; 1 Pet 2:9).

5:11–14 The chorus of worshipers expands beyond the elders and living creatures to include an innumerable number of angels and "every creature" in every place. The heavenly host extols the Lamb as "worthy" (cf. 5:9) and offers him sevenfold praise, which is elsewhere reserved for God Almighty (cf. 7:12). The universal song in 5:13 praises God and the Lamb together, and the scene concludes fittingly with an "Amen!" from the living creatures who represent God's creation and continued worship by the twenty-four elders.