



Sermon Series Notes

“Raptured” (Revelation 4 & 5)

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4:1 I am personally convinced that this represents the rapture of the church & marks the beginning of that seven year period known as The Great Tribulation. We call it the rapture because of the Greek term used in I Thess.4:17 (read I Thess.4:16-17. It is the word “harpazo,” and it means “to seize, carry off by force, snatch away.”

4:2 John does not go bodily to heaven, but rather is translated in his spirit. In II Cor.12 the apostle Paul says he was caught up to the third heaven, but he didn’t know if he was in the body or out of the body. Paul no doubt saw the same throne that John sees here.

4:3 They say ancient jasper would have been similar to a diamond; Carnelian is a deep brilliant red, and emerald a very lively green.

4:4 We are not told who the twenty four elders are, but my guess is twelve patriarchs of the OT, and twelve apostles of the NT. In Matt.19:28 Jesus told the apostles that they would one day sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. See also Rev. 21:12-14.

4:5 Isa.11:2 Spirit of the LORD...wisdom...understanding...counsel...power...knowledge...fear of the Lord.

4:6-8 Moses and some of the leaders of Israel went up on Mt. Sinai, and it says they saw the God of Israel, and “under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.” (Ex.24:10). Ezekiel also saw a vision of this throne & the four living creatures (see Ezekiel.1:10, 22, 25-28); Lion represents majesty, king of beasts, King of kings & Lord of lords; Ox represents both a servant, and strength; man represents intelligence, as well as rank in order of creation (made a little lower than the angels); Eagle seems to represent transcendence.

4:9-11 There is no doubt that the one seated on the throne here is God the Father. He is referred to in the book of Daniel as the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9-10). This chapter ends acknowledging the Father’s worthiness to receive glory, honor & power, because he created all things. To be very technical, the Father laid out the plan of creation, and it was carried out by the second person of the Trinity, the Word of God.

- Col.1:15-16 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

This is fascinating in light of what comes next in chapter 5.

5:1 Opinions vary as to exactly what this scroll is, but it's description is similar to an ancient will.

5:2-4 We are not told how, but John seems to know what is contained in this scroll. He may not know the exact details, but he knows enough about it to be deeply distraught over no one being found worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. The words that describe his weeping mean that he wept hard and long.

We know from reading and studying the book of Revelation that this scroll contains the ultimate fulfillment of the will of God in the plan of redemption.

As each seal of this scroll is opened, God takes one more step in judging evil, but He does it gradually. Why? Because he wants all men to be saved (II Peter 3:9). See Rev.14:6-7a. Revelation ends with Satan and his entourage cast into the lake of fire, along with all mankind who have refused God's gracious offer of redemption. Revelation 21, God makes new heavens and a new earth, and the redeemed enter into an eternity where there is no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. And I might add, there is no more evil. See Rev.21:27.

- Col.1:13-14...he **has** rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Redeem: To buy back

Redemption is the main theme of the Bible. Genesis 1 is creation, Genesis 3 has been called the fall of man. And with man's fall comes the curse, and everything goes awry. But Gen.3:15 is the first message of hope, prophesying that a Messiah would one day come and redeem everything that had been lost. We are reminded of this coming Messiah in the story of Abraham & Isaac. The whole OT sacrificial system was meant to teach that only the sacrifice of the coming Messiah could take away man's sin, and in our study of the Tabernacle a few Wednesdays ago we saw that everything about the Tabernacle typified the mission of the Messiah. The Psalms are full of specific prophesies about this Messiah, as is the book of Isaiah. The prophet Micah told us exactly where he would be born (Micah 5:2); As the NT opens, John the Baptist points the world to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

Romans 8:21-22 says that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth, waiting for the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. And the redemption of the creation is inseparably tied to the redemption of "the children of God." Romans 8 makes very clear who the children of God are, it's those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. This of course would include John.

So WHY is John weeping? Read 5:2-3 again. We do not know how much time passed here, but once again, the words describing his weeping mean that he wept long and hard.

Can you imagine what could have been going on in John's mind? He knows Jesus. He saw Jesus after he rose from the dead. He had a glorious vision of Jesus in his glorified body in Revelation chapter one. Could he be thinking, "Where is Jesus, isn't he the worthy one, the Messiah?" Could it be possible that his emotions were mixed with thoughts of doubt? If John the Baptist, the one who introduced Jesus to the world as "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," could have doubts, certainly John the apostle could have here. I realize we are not told exactly what John is thinking, and I am speculating. But

we do know he is very distraught, longing for someone to come, open the seven sealed scroll, and fulfill the will of God in the plan of redemption.

See Isaiah 61:2. When Jesus read this in the synagogue, he stopped mid verse, leaving out the prophecy about vengeance. Jesus' first coming was to die on the cross, and His second coming is to judge the world, to eradicate evil, to make right every wrong. See II Thess.1:5-10. The majority of the book of Revelation is the fulfillment of the latter part of Isaiah 61:2! John weeps because he longs for God to bring justice to the earth, to right all wrongs, and to establish his eternal kingdom. That is why he weeps.

Let's think for a moment about where John is when he sees this vision. He's on the island of Patmos. Go back over how he got there...

Every one of the writers of the NT were horribly persecuted; Matthew was beheaded, as was the apostle Paul, Mark was dragged to death by a team of wild horses, Luke was hanged in an Olive tree. John was the only one who died a natural death, but you of course know how much he suffered. I think he might have been a little disappointed that he outlived his peers! Peter and Jude were crucified, and James was battered to death with a club.

I know all of us who know Jesus long for the soon fulfillment of the will of God in the plan of redemption. But those who are suffering intensely long for it more intensely.

5:5 What encouraging words!

5:6 John is told that the Lion of the tribe of Judah has triumphed, and when he turns to see this lion he beholds a Lamb, and this Lamb has scars, the kinds of scars that suggests it had been slaughtered ("butchered"). This Lamb is the center of attention in John's heavenly vision. He has seven horns implying ultimate power and authority (Ps.75:10). He has seven eyes, which are the sevenfold Spirit of God.

5:7-8 The implication here is clear. When the Lion, who is the Lamb, breaks the seals and opens the scrolls, every prayer that has ever been prayed in the will of God will be answered.

5:9-10 It's a prophetic song!

5:11-12 Can you imagine what this sounds like? But it gets even better, and much LOUDER!

5:13-14 This Lamb is on the same level as a being as the One seated on the throne in chapter four.

Have everyone say together as loudly as possible:

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

To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
Be praise and honor and glory and power
For ever and ever!

See Isa.45:22-23. The NT adds some detail not given in Isa.45. See Phil.2:5-11.

I don't know what it is you're going through, but I can tell you that if you get your attention on the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Lamb of God, you will be encouraged and filled with hope. One day we will literally be raptured, but I pray that we experience a fresh rapture in the Spirit as we focus on our triumphant & glorious Savior, Jesus Christ.

Read Rom.8:35-37

Say Rom.8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Say Rom.8:32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Refer to I Cor.3:22; II Cor.1:20

The apostle Paul was told how much he would have to suffer for Christ (Acts 9:16). He gives us a summary of his sufferings in II Cor.11:23b-28 (read). But despite all he suffered for Christ, he was able to write an amazing statement in Rom.8:18 (read). Read Isa.65:17; I don't believe for a moment that this verse means God wipes out our memory. It has to mean that our future redemption experience will be so glorious that we won't for a moment entertain thoughts of the past.

Who knows what the immediate future holds for us personally. But whatever it holds, if we keep our eyes on Jesus, we will have hope.

CONCLUSION

- Heb.2:8b-9a...at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus...
- Rom.13:12 The night is nearly over, the day is almost here...
- Psalm 30:5...weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.