

Dana Harris: “The power and strength (political, military, or other) of a lion is not what is needed to defeat evil kings or kingdoms. Instead, it is the surprising vulnerability and weakness of a Lamb, who was slaughtered and resurrected, that vanquishes evil and ushers in the new creation.” (Reading Revelation in Context, 63-64.)

- C. Revelation calls us to forsake the ways of the dragon and pursue the way of the Lamb. But that will require patient endurance on the part of the saints. It is the only way to overcome.



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LIVE THE STORY

The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How many themes from the Exodus story can you find in Revelation?
- How do the images of chapter 4—5 mock the powerful empire of Rome and its emperor cult?
- We don’t have emperor worship in the same way they had in John’s day, but how might we face similar temptations?
- Why might the worship of the beings in chapters 4-5 encourage the saints in the churches of Asia minor?
- How does the worship of God here surpass that of Caesar’s cult?
- How might the prayers of the saints which are described in 6:9-10 inform the kinds of prayers the churches were praying?
- How is the image of “one like a son of man” from Daniel 7 updated in Revelation 4-5? How might Daniel 7 inform these chapters?
- Why might worshiping the Lamb as the path to victory require patient endurance? How does it require patience from you?
- What aspect of this text/message spoke to you most?

The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Worship and Witness in a Winner-takes-all World (11)

Jerry Cisar — October 22, 2023

Text: Revelation 4-5

Introduction: Exodus, The Sequel

I. Lampooning by God

- A. Revelation mocks the cult of emperor worship in John’s day.
- i. Its symbols are often understood in light of the empire’s story of power and progress.
 - ii. Psalm 2 God lampoons the kings and rulers of the world!
- B. Heavenly Temple / Royal Throne Room
- i. The heavenly throne room is the heavenly temple.
 - a) An altar (6:9-11)
 - b) The prayers of the saints (8:1-6)
 - c) The ark of the covenant (11:19)
 - ii. Any earthly worship scene would seem laughable in comparison.

“This [superior glory] was no easy task, for both imperial and local cult celebrations pulled out all the stops in drawing their audiences into their assertions of divine authority.” (Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now)

C. The 4 Creatures

- i. Lion (Leo) = spring = fire
- ii. Bull/ox (Taurus) = summer = earth
- iii. Human face (Scorpio) = fall = water
- iv. Eagle (Pegasus) = winter = air.

D. What does this say to us today?

“Worship is shown to be primarily a political act: one worships whom-ever or whatever one affirms as possessing true power to affect people's lives, the central currency of politics in all ages.” (Unveiling Empire: Reading Revelation Then and Now)

iii. When the Lamb is revealed (5:9-10)

iv. The innumerable company of angels (5:12)

v. All creation in unison sings (5:13).

C. There is something very Jewish going on in this scene.

i. The prayers of the saints (5:8)

a) 8:3-4

b) 6:9-10

➤ laments and imprecatory psalms

c) Revelation is full of liturgy (worship) and prayer, and that these prayers are lament and imprecation, it tells us something about the book.

Revelation declares the reign of God by a people suffering at the hands of humans who think they are gods.

II. Liturgy Surrounding God

A. The same scene as Hebrews 12:22-24 with expanded symbolism

- i. A heavenly temple on a heavenly Zion in a heavenly Jerusalem
- ii. John sees things which can only be perceived from heaven's perspective... i.e. what can only be perceived by faith.

B. This scene is liturgical, which is to say that it describes and draws us into worship.

- i. The 4 living creatures (4:8)
- ii. The 24 elders join in, laying their crowns before him (4:11).

III. Lamb of God

A. John's vision most clearly parallels is Daniel 7.

B. The Lamb as God's Way to Victory.