

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

The Book of Revelation
Lesson 4: Worthy Is the Lamb

Revelation chapter 1 describes the attorney representing the fallen world. In chapters 2 and 3, we read the indictments. Then in chapters 4 and 5 we are ushered into the courtroom of the universe, and shown the Judge and jury. The heavenly court will remain in session until probation closes, after every case has been presented, all evidence has been heard, and all the facts have been investigated, then judgment will be handed down for execution of the sentence—He that is unjust will remain unjust, and he that is filthy will remain filthy; he that is righteousness will remain so, and he that is holy will be holy for all eternity (see Rev. 22:11).

Maybe you harbor doubts about the outcome of these heavenly proceedings. The 1888 messengers give us good news. “Surely all doubt as to acceptance with God ought to be set at rest. But it is not. The evil heart of unbelief still suggests doubts. ‘I believe all this, but—.’ There, stop right there; if you believed you wouldn’t say ‘but.’ ... Now the question is, have you delivered yourself to Him? If you have, you may be sure that He has accepted you. If you are not His, it is solely because you have refused to deliver to Him that which He has bought. You are defrauding Him.” [1]

God’s people have nothing to fear from this court proceeding, because we have been promised that judgment will be “given in favor of the saints” (Dan. 7:22).

While political, social, and even environmental chaos is increasing around the world, we have the assurance of stability at the very center of the universe, where our God sits enthroned and in command of all things. High and lifted up, our God is the focal point of all that exists. The message of the everlasting gospel calls all the world to worship the Creator who made heaven and earth and all things that are in existence (Rev. 14:6, 7). This divine Being is identified as worthy to “receive glory and honour and power” (Rev. 4:11). Christ taught us to pray to the Father because His is the kingdom and power and glory that will endure forever (see Matt. 6:13). Our God is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:21).

Revelation’s description of the grandeur of God’s throne, though dazzling to our dark mind, fails in fully describing its wonderfulness. Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem was the most magnificent structure on earth, and modern architects have assessed its worth at more than ninety billion dollars. We would stand in awe of such a structure, unwilling to even place the soles of our dirty shoes on its dazzling floor. But the One who is in the majestic heavenly building is beyond description in His glory and splendor, unapproachable in the light in which He dwells (1 Tim. 6:16).

In the heavenly sanctuary there is no place here for frivolity or self-exaltation. Those present there can only fall on their faces before God in total humility. This ought to give us guidance as to how we conduct ourselves in the house of God on Sabbath morning. The worship hour is sacred, and should reflect what takes place in the heavenly sanctuary on Sabbath morning. “Frivolous ditties fit for the dance hall” have no place in Christian worship. It causes “the pure angels to gather their light closer around them, and darkness envelops those in that [church]. The angels are moving from the scene. Sadness is upon [the angel’s] countenances. Behold, they are weeping.” [2]

The heavenly sanctuary is little thought of in the church today, but “this true priesthood, ministry, and sanctuary of Christ in heaven is too plain in the New Testament to be by any possibility denied. Yet, in the face of all this, it is a thing that is hardly ever thought of; it is a thing almost unknown, and even hardly believed, in the Christian world today.” [3]

In chapter 5 our vision is shifted from the magnificence of the throne of God, which is too much for us to comprehend, to a “Lamb as it had been slain” (Rev. 5:6). A loud voice proclaims, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!” (Rev. 5:12). The Greek word for “slain” means done to death with violence, butchered. The apostle John used the same word in describing Cain’s murder of his brother (1 John 3:12), and Cain killed his brother because of the violence and evil in his own heart. Therefore we can conclude that this Lamb standing before the throne of God is an innocent Victim. Our wickedness butchered the innocent Son of God. Stop and think about that next time you’re tempted to sin.

“When the apostle looked into the city, to the place where thousands of angels were assembled before the throne, he saw in the midst of it a Lamb, as it had been slain. We have come to the innumerable company of angels, and to Jesus the Mediator, and to the blood of sprinkling. ... His blood is shed, and it is counted for us, because He identifies Himself with us in our sin. And as we lay hold of Him by faith, He comes into our hearts, and His blood is ever flowing to cleanse the sin.” [4]

Why do the twenty-four elders and the angelic host proclaim this Lamb “worthy”? Was He “worthy” of the justice of the broken law to which He surrendered, that demanded the life of the sinner? Was He “worthy” of the death He received? Was He “worthy” of the brutality of His crucifixion, and rejection by the men He came to save? Of what is He worthy? He is worthy to “receive power [authority], and riches [abundance], and wisdom [in executing His counsels], strength [power to hold sin in check], and honour [preeminence of rank], and glory [highest praise], and blessing [elaborate praise]” (Rev. 5:12).

Of these He is “worthy”—but why? Because He was willing and able to “lay down His life for His friends” (John 15:13). “While we were yet sinners” and “were [His] enemies,” Christ “died for us.” The Lamb was brutally killed for the salvation of “the ungodly” (Rom. 5:6-10). And now He stands before the throne of God to plead His shed blood in our

behalf. Please do not misread this. God is not the angry ogre paganism proclaims Him to be. No! God is the One who gave the Sacrificial Lamb to effect the reconciliation between sinners and His holy character. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). It was God that set forth Christ to be an atonement for us through faith in His blood (see Rom. 3:24, 25). The Third Person of the Godhead is also involved in our salvation as the “seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth,” seven indicating the fullness and completeness of His work.

Knowing that so much has been given to us to effect the completion of the “mystery of God” (Rev. 10:7) which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27), why do we continue to delay in believing the good news? What on earth is so attractive that we want it more than we want to see Christ and His Father vindicated of the false and vicious charges placed against Them by Satan when he fell in heaven?

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.’ In attempting any description of this love, we feel that we are as an infant lisping its first words. Silently we may adore; for silence in this matter is the only eloquence. This love is past all language to describe. It is the mystery of God in the flesh, God in Christ, and divinity in humanity. Christ bowed down in unparalleled humility, that in His exaltation to the throne of God, He might also exalt those who believe in Him, to a seat with Him upon His throne. All who look upon Jesus in faith that the wounds and bruises that sin has made will be healed in Him, shall be made whole.” [5]

“It is written that ‘in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished.’ Rev. 10:7. The mystery of God ‘is Christ in you, the hope of glory.’ Col. 1:26, 27.” [6]

“The time of the coming of the Lord and the restitution of all things is indeed at the very doors. And when Jesus comes, it is to take His people unto Himself. It is to present to Himself His glorious church, ‘not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,’ but that is ‘holy and without blemish.’ It is to see Himself perfectly reflected in all His saints. ...

“This consummation is accomplished in the cleansing of the sanctuary, which is the finishing of the mystery of God, which is the final finishing of transgression, the making of a complete end of sins, the making of reconciliation for iniquity, the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, the sealing up of the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the most Holy.” [See Daniel 9:24]. [7]

“The themes of redemption are momentous themes, and only those who are spiritually minded can discern their depth and significance.” [8]

—Ann Walper

Endnotes:

[1] E. J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, p. 82, 83; Glad Tidings ed. (1999).

[2] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 506.

[3] A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 92; Glad Tidings ed. (2003).

[4] E. J. Waggoner, "Christ Our Passover," *The Present Truth*, Oct. 25, 1894.

[5] Ellen G. White, "The Teacher of Truth the Only Safe Educator," *Review and Herald*, Nov. 17, 1891.

[6] A. T. Jones, "Editorial Note," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, Dec. 13, 1898.

[7] A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, pp. 125, 126.

[8] Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 17, 1891.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/IQKVcZex5NI>

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