

## **THE THRONE, THE LAMB, and THE BOOK: Rev 5 and 6**

There are three essential themes in these two chapters. I do not want to get us lost in trying to explain a lot of symbolism. The three essential themes in these two chapters are: the throne, the Lamb, and the book.

In Rev 4:2, "Immediately I was in the Spirit and behold a throne was standing in heaven." John then describes the scene of One sitting on the throne and what is going on around the throne. It continues, Rev 5:1, "I saw on the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals." Verse 6, "And I saw between the throne (in the middle of the throne with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God, sent out into the earth."

In the letters to the churches, Christ reveals the true nature of the church. The layout in chapters four and five reveals the nature of history from the standpoint of the throne. It is interesting that before John gets into any of the other symbolism of Revelation, to any of the real messages that are to follow, he first shows us a picture of the throne of God. The central fact of heaven is not angelic bliss, as most people think when they write songs for Christ; **the central fact of heaven is the absolute authority of God over heaven and earth. This is symbolized by the throne. God is the determiner of all things both in heaven and on earth.**

**A correct understanding of the world, the events that take place in the world, and in our lives begins with a correct understanding of the centrality of the throne of God. We each exist to act upon the earth, no matter what it is. Global events, events in our own lives, everything that happens on this earth falls within exact precision of the unfolding of the eternal plans of God. However small it may be, however strange it may seem to us, and however we may misunderstand or not understand it, nothing occurs without His knowledge and Him ordering it.**

John sees a throne at the center of the universe, despite what Carl Sagan might try to teach us. It is the throne of God that set in the center of all things. **Now, note something interesting about this in Rev 4:4, "And around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon these thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns upon their heads." Not only is there a throne in heaven, God rules from that throne; around God's throne are 24 thrones, with an elder dressed in white garments with crowns on their heads sitting on those thrones.**

**Who are those elders? Their white garments signify that they are priests, and the golden crowns signify they are kings. As we will learn in Rev 5:10, "Thou has made them to be a kingdom of priests to our God; and we are they will reign upon the earth." John already said this in Rev 1:6, "And He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." God is saying the church is a priesthood made up of kings. God has made us to be a kingdom of priests.**

But why 24? If we go back to the Old Testament, we find the answer (by allowing scripture interpret scripture). In I Chronicles 24 and 25, David is dividing up his priesthood and the one who will lead in the worship of God, I Chronicles 24:1, "Now the divisions of the descendants of Aaron were these," and he names them by their families. If you will notice in verse 18, "the twenty-fourth for Maaziah." There are 24 divisions among the priesthood. Then in chapter 25, verse 1, "MOREOVER, David and the commanders of the army set apart for the service (that is for worship) some of the sons of Asaph and Heman and of Jeduthin, who were to prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals and the number of those who performed their service was:" and he lists them by name and he ends that chapter by saying, verse 31, "for the twenty-fourth to Romamti-ezer and his sons," the twenty-fourth.

**The priesthood was divided into 24 groups. The leaders of worship were divided into 24 groups. We have that symbolism carried over into Revelation: a kingdom of priests is represented before the throne by 24 elders. I have no doubt that these 24 elders who are on thrones before the throne of God represent the church, the priesthood of believers. The kingdom of priests that have been called out of the world and redeemed by His blood. The church is a part of the court of heaven.**

**Let's note the significance of what John is saying in this great Revelation. There is a throne in heaven that rules the universe, but around that throne, amid all this that is described before the throne, are 24 thrones. Twenty-four elders representing the church. I say that because Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:6, the believer has been called up spiritually with Christ and "We are sitting with Christ in heavenly places."**

**We have not given that the attention that we should have in the church. We have looked at the struggles and the trials of the church here upon the earth and we have missed the point that spiritually the church is a part of the court of heaven. We are sitting with Christ in heavenly places. We are His body. We are a part of Christ, He is the head, seated beside the throne at the right hand of the Father ruling from heaven, but He is surrounded by 24 thrones. His body is sitting with Him, in Him, in heavenly places. And according to Matthew 16 and 18, they are binding and loosing upon earth what has been bound and loosed in heaven. That is the throne. We will still come back to it later.**

There is also the Lamb. Between the throne and the four living creatures and the elders, the Lamb was standing, as if slain. He is talking about the character of Christ there. He is a Lamb, which was slain, which represents, of course, the sacrifice that He made on the cross. Then John describes who He in chapter five. Rev 5:5, "One of the elders said to me, 'stop weeping (John was weeping because no-one in heaven and earth was found worthy to open the sealed book); behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the 'book and its seven seals.'" The Lamb that is standing before the throne is the Lion of the tribe of Judah, he is the Root of David.

What about the root of David, the tribe of the Lion of Judah? In Romans 15:12, Paul mentions Him in quoting from Isaiah, where Isaiah says, "THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE, AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES, IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE." The root of the tribe of Jesse is going to rule the nations. That is what the word Gentile is. The word stems from the Hebrew term "goy" which means a "nation." Jesus is going to rule over the nations. The Lamb that was slain is the Lion of Judah, the Root of Jesse, the Root of David who will rule the nations. He will rule because He has been given all authority. And we have that in the Great Commission, "But all authority both in heaven and earth is given unto Him." There is nothing that happens in heaven or on earth that is beyond or out of His control.

**He puts it this way in John 5:27, which I think is an interesting statement. He is talking about Jesus Himself having the authority and the power to give life, speaking of God, "He (God) gave Him (Jesus) authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." God gave Jesus authority to rule, authority to judge, authority to execute judgment Not Because Jesus is the Son of God, but because Jesus is the "Son of Man." A man has authority now to execute judgment because in the beginning God put the authority and the dominion of the earth under man. And the man that has that authority and that dominion and power now is the Lamb that was slain, the Root of David, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Son of Man, Jesus Christ. That is the Lamb.**

Now the book. In Rev 5:1, "And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals." This is the means by which the Lamb ruled, that has been shown us in the book of Revelation. When anyone opens the seals, things begin to happen upon the earth. And lo, it is by this book, the sealed book, that He reigns. This description is like the Ten Commandments. Exodus 32:15 shows us the two tablets of the Ten Commandments "which were written on both sides, they were written on one *side* and the other." **This book is symbolic of the New Covenant, like the Ten Commandments.**

When the seals are broken, when in the sixth chapter, He begins to open the seals, things began to happen upon the earth. This is symbolic of the fact that Christ is ruling the universe based on the New Covenant. God rules by covenant. **Rev 4:3, John saw the fact that there was a rainbow around the throne. The rainbow is a symbol of the covenant.**

Let's go back to Genesis 8 and 9, whenever God made a covenant with Noah. Now remember, God does not make covenant with unbelievers. God always makes covenant with only believers. Any time a covenant is made, it affects believers. Unbelievers benefit by it, the power of the past, of the nature of the man, ut God never makes a covenant with an unbeliever. The rainbow is a perpetual reminder about God's covenant to restrain His wrath on man upon the earth.

Genesis 8:20-21, Noah is offering a burnt offering. Verse 21, "And the Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every

living creature as I have done." Gen 9:2-7, God makes a covenant with Noah and says, "And the fear of you and the terror of you shall be on every beast of earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant. Only you shall not eat the flesh with its life, *that is, its* blood. And surely I will require your life-blood; from *every* beast I will require it. And from *every* man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man. 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by a man his blood shall be shed, for the image of God, He made man. And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; populate the earth abundantly and multiply it.'"

I read all of that because the rainbow was a sign of the covenant (Gen 9:13) that God made with Noah that God would not send His wrath upon the world again, as he did in the flood. In this covenant, God put all living things upon the earth under the dominion and the authority of Noah, or the authority of men. God goes so far as to put capital punishment under the authority of man. You see, God said, "I will never again destroy every living creature as I have done," but He gave man the awesome responsibility of ruling. That is why capital punishment is true to that Noahic covenant. It is part of the pact that God was not going to get vengeance as He did with the flood, but He placed that authority in the hands of men. Man is to be the one who brings vengeance, in this case by capital punishment.

**Now, go down to Gen 9:12, "And God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations.'" It talks about all the earth and all flesh. Genesis 9:12 basically means the whole world is to be protected by God's covenant people. This means His people are over the animals, the birds, the fishes; everything is under the command of man. Evil, wicked men who commit murder and shed man's blood are put under the dominion of covenant.**

**It is important that you get that. God does not make covenant with unbelievers. He makes covenant with believers. Unbelievers benefit from the covenant that God has made with His people. That is signified by the rainbow. God put the rainbow in the clouds in Noah's day to remind him of this covenant.**

**In the book of Revelation when you see the rainbow you are reminded that God is dealing with His covenant people. God's covenant is that this covenant people are to have dominion over the earth. That is indicative from what we saw of the covenant God made with Noah.**

**Back to Revelation . . . we have said all of this about the throne, the Lamb, the covenant book, and the covenant people in order to say this: The purpose of God's revelation of the throne is not to satisfy our curiosity. This Revelation is to prepare the church for the battle, which is going to come, and to assure them that the victory is theirs. The battles to come are going to be described beginning in chapter six, but the church is going to come through it all victorious. The purpose of this unveiling is to leave the church without**

**excuse, to give the believers peace and joy in the midst of suffering and trials and war that is going to come upon the church.**

**There are thrones and there are crowns which signifies dominion and rulership. God is ruling from His throne, but there are a covenant people surrounding Him who are also upon thrones. The church is enthroned in heaven and it has the authority of God invested in it. Therefore, it is responsible to rule and to reign on behalf of Christ.**

**The Christian, then, has no right to be surprised by victory. He should not be surprised at what happens in world events or in the history of the world. We should not be surprised because we are in command of it in Christ. And we should know its nature and its history. If we do not know it, it means we have not been listening, we have not believed what God is saying. Psm 27:13, we believe God's word, then we see!!**

**The covenant people of God have always been in charge of culture. They have been in charge of it since the flood. When God made this covenant with Noah, He put His people in charge of the earth, just like He did in the beginning with Adam. Man was wiped off the face of the earth in the flood. God re-established His covenant with His only chosen and faithful surviving man. That is an awesome responsibility. We do not have to take charge of the world. We do not have to take over the world of culture. We already have it. We need to start using it aright. What I am saying is right now, in your life and in my life, in these times it has always been true . . . the church rules the nations of the world. And God is holding the church responsible for what happens in the world around us.**

Have we I lost our senses? I am saying that rulers in this world are doing exactly what the church allows them to do and exactly what the church has called them to do. You ask what is the scripture on that? **Let me give you a verse that should scare us all to death. Proverbs 16:7, listen, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." Now get that, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him." There are two passages to illustrate my point.**

One is Genesis 33:4, beginning when Jacob is returning from exile to meet his enemy who is his brother Esau. But first, Jacob has an encounter with God before he meets Esau. Whenever Jacob gets his life and his family and everything concerning his being right with God, he then goes out to meet his enemy Esau. He has not seen Esau in 20 years. Jacob thinks Esau is coming out to kill him. But when Esau finds Jacob, Esau receives Jacob as his long-lost brother and they are friends. Why? Because Jacob has made peace with God. Before Jacob tries to make peace with Esau, he makes peace with God. And when Jacob makes peace with God, there is peace with his enemy, Esau.

Turn to another example, II Chronicles 17:3, "And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, but he sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not do as Israel did." Verses 9-10,

"and they taught in Judah, *having* the book of the law of the Lord with them; and they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people. Now the dread of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat." Do you see the picture? When Jehoshaphat and Israel made peace with God, obeyed the law, did His will, and taught His word, God caused the enemies around them to be at peace.

That is in the old testament. That does not apply or happen today? Look at the second chapter of Acts, the church is just getting started and the church was doing something, verses 42-44 and , "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (they were busy worshiping God and doing His will). And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place with the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common (everyone's needs were taken care of) . . . verse 47, and they continued to praise God and have favor with people." Now, Acts 5:39-42, fear came upon the Jewish leaders because of what they saw in the lives of the church. It happens today.

**Proverbs 16:7 tells us that the church actually controls civil governments. The church, by what it does, by its relationship to God actually governs the world. If we do not rule, Satan gets a foot hold. If we fail to rule, Satan will wrongfully influence the events of nations and worldly outcomes. How do Christians rule? About the only thing that we are interested in is getting to heaven, and here is a guy talking about Christians ruling the world in Christ, as if we are already in heaven. We are in heaven, we are already there, and we share in Christ's rule as His body.**

**We do not rule, first and foremost, by activism. We do not rule first and foremost by evangelism. We do not even rule first and foremost by prayer, as important as those things may be. The church rules first and foremost through our interface and our interactions with God. By pleasing God through faithful lives or by displeasing Him by being unfaithful. The faithfulness or the unfaithfulness of the church determines the direction the world takes. Now that's been overlooked in scripture but it is there.**

**God is ruling from His throne but there are 24 elders around the throne; the church is enthroned in heaven and the church has power and authority to rule. Our faithless preachers and elders who have reject God's word for 2,000 years in preference to the worthless, unbiblical, unfruitful, false teachings and theories of men have reduced our understanding of God's plan for the body of Christ, the church, to our being faithful just so Jesus can forgive our sins so we can go to heaven after Jesus Returns. How worthless, shallow, insignificant of a betrayal (handed over to Satan) of God's word is this compared to God's stated structure, purpose, service, ruling power and authority over everything that is alive and moving in this world in Christ.**

**Our preachers and elders have disengaged us, the church, from 98% of what God has for us to do in Christ, as our acceptable service toward God, with the impact being that Christ is failing God by failing to accomplish in the world the things God needs Christ to accomplish for His Father's glory and honor. The church has a tremendous responsibility and our preachers and elders are as far off the mark as the Old Jewish high priests were with Christ. This is so serious, it makes preachers, elders, and church leaders reject all-the-more the word of God by pushing this subject over-yonder when Jesus Returns, just like the Old Jewish high priests rejected Jesus all-the-more by refusing to repent, ask for forgiveness, and start aright with God and Jesus.**

I believe the Bible is teaching us that we are to be faithful to God in order that we may, through that faithfulness, affect the world around us and begin to reclaim the world, our nation, its people to God's glory and honor to hasten Jesus' Return. By not moving two-inches in this direction in the last 2,000 years, we are delaying Jesus Return indefinitely, and causing enormous, unfathomable, unnecessary suffering to the world that the church is charged to protect. Believers may be saved, but look at the rewards we are sacrificing to Satan on Satan's alter of unbelief in God's word (Satan believes it, we don't because we are not being taught that we must believe then we will see God's word).

**Proverbs 16:7: am I exaggerating? How can one person or one church really make any difference? It only took one man by the name of Joseph to convert Egypt. It only took one man by the name of Jonah to convert Assyria (he did not even want to see them converted). It only took four men, Daniel and his company, to convert Nebuchadnezzar during the Babylonian captivity. It took them a while to do it, they did not do it over night, and they had to go through suffering, peril, and heartache in order to do it, but they did it. And they were living under the old covenant, not the new, with access to Father, access to His throne in Christ, to all of the richest resources in heaven, to everything that pertains to life and Godliness, to the wisdom of God, to the mind of Christ, to the head of all thing for the church. By renewed faith and fundamental belief in God's word, let's stop missing out by not performing 98% our acceptable service to God in Christ Jesus!**

What kind of signals has the church been sending to our rulers? What kind of signals has the church been sending to the world? How can we start sending different signals? We do not change the rulers of the world, we do not change the world by hypocritically telling them to do things that we, the church, will not do ourselves. That is the problem with Christian activism and with most modern evangelism today.

We are busy telling the world and sending a message to our rulers wanting them to do something that we as a church will not do. We go door to door telling people that they should fear God when we as the church do not fear Him about what He says for us to do in His word. Do not think the world fails to understand our message. We tell the government to judge justly when the church through the centuries has refused to practice physical church discipline. We want the government to get out of debt and the church owes trillions of dollars to God in back tithes and

offerings; and trillions more to men at the banks where we have borrowed money in order to erect unnecessary clutter. We expect the government to get out of debt when the church is head over heels in debt excess and the church has forsaken their obligation to give to the Lord as they ought. The world understands our message and sees our blundering failures in each and every item we throw stones at them for failing to do.

**Understand what is going on: The problem goes much deeper than the world seeing the hypocritical nature of the modern church and, therefore, does not listen to it. We do not need to persuade our rulers to do differently, we need to persuade God. Let God know that we as His people are serious about getting right with God and His word. If the church is truly faithful to God by believing His word, seeing the goodness of God in the land of the living, dying to self so the only life in us is Jesus living His life in us, performing our acceptable service to God in Christ (not 2% but 98%+), God will get serious with the our nation and nations around us.**

**In scripture, any a time His people began to take God seriously, persecution and suffering always followed. That may be a riddle, enigma, but it is always true. Any time they took God seriously they went through a period of persecution and suffering. When it ends, they always precipitate change in the world around them. And change always came. Joseph had spent two years in a stinking detention pit and being forgotten by all who had any influence, but God raised him up to be the prime minister. Daniel may have been thrown into a pit of lions, the Hebrew children thrown into a fiery furnace, and we may go through all kinds of suffering and trials in like in Babylon, but God made Daniel the prime minister and through Daniel converted Nebuchadnezzar.**

That is what the book of Revelation is about. There are going to be trials, sufferings, temptations, but through it all, if we are faithful there's going to be significant change in our culture.

Here are a few simple, elementary things that the church can do:

1. We take the word of God seriously. You can have something to say to a church, but the crying need of the religious world today, God's covenant people, is to begin to take His word seriously. All of it. Both the Old and the New Testaments. We made a mistake if we have laid the Old Testament on the shelf and have made a big deal about our being a New Testament people. We do not become a New Testament people without understanding the Old Testament. We do not understand the New Testament or the Kingdom of God without first understanding what He did in the Old Testament. Most modern churches have mostly thrown that out the window. Our attitude toward both testaments in the word of God needs to be increased in our homes and families.

Just a couple of weeks ago I was sent to a lady and a church a committee meeting,



which ended up with a full fellowship meeting together in the pews. They met with us too. I not said this outside this conversation, but I stood there amazed noting the concern on some of the peoples' faces as they identified the nature of their chief complaint. Folks from that church, who sat on this committee, were concerned the preacher's message exceeding 29-minurtes. They were not concerned about the preacher's doctrine. They were comfortable with that. The preacher was long-winded. We went through their complaints against the preacher. One man said, "anybody that preaches past 29 minutes should be disciplined or removed." At the 30-minute point, most preachers are just getting warmed up. We expect our children to pay attention six, seven, eight hours in a classroom, but then can't pay attention 30 or 40 minutes in the church for a sermon. Statistics claim most of us paid attention to the television for seven to eight hours each day, but we cannot get through 29 minutes of preaching. We can watch a soap opera all afternoon or a ball game for two hours, but we can't listen to a sermon over 29 minutes? If I lose them after 30-minutes, they miss the best part of the lesson.

That is a prevailing attitude towards the word of God. The world has picked up on that. The world looks at the church and says, "they do not really take the word of God seriously." Most churches send this signal to their rulers that God's word is not important. That is how the church has been ruling. No wonder they are taking God out of public schools. We have told them by our actions and attitudes within our own buildings it really is not important anyway.

2. The second thing we can do, and I just pulled these things out because I think they are important, there are a lot of things we could do, we could practice the Lord's supper properly. The majority of the religious world pays little attention to the Lord's supper. We are invited to a feast every week with our Lord. He says, "Bring bread and wine and we will have a feast." Most cannot be bothered but about four times a year. So why should God bless? Many of us rarely pay no attention to its meaning.

We have yet found the scriptural meaning and put it into practice what the Lord's Supper means and what it ought to mean. It is a covenant meal. According to Paul in Corinthians, it is a covenant meal of sharing together. They actually had a supper. They had a love feast. They had a meal where they shared together with those who were less fortunate than the ones who had. And at that meal of sharing together, they broke bread and drank wine and had the Lord's supper. Some churches have a meal during the week, but they do not call it the Lord's Supper.

The scriptures talk about wine, but we use grape juice. The Passover drink was wine. In the old testament the unleavened bread was to be eaten with bitter herbs, there was to be a bitterness experienced there because it reminds them of death. The bitterness of wine touching our lips would remind us of the bitterness of last supper of Christ. But we've watered all that down so we take grape juice instead with unleavened bread

bits. If you are concerned about God's wrath for drinking wine, and I am not advocating drinking wine, read Deuteronomy 14:24-26, you may bring your tithes in and with this tithe it says, "And you may spend the money for whatever your heart desires, for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household."

Isn't that something? God says to His people have a party, have a good time with the first tithes that you bring in to the storehouse. The bitterness of wine would remind us of the bitterness of Jesus' death. What does this thing signal to our world and to our rulers? We tend numb the signal that expressing charitable sharing based upon the death of Christ is not really important. That is the way we are leading.

3. We can support the church financially. When we steal from God, we take our time and our energy to simply amass wealth to live in luxury. When we are in debt to the world and in debt to God, we are sending a message to the rulers of the world that national debt, inflation, debased currency is all right. That is the way that we present our ruling in America. According to Paul, we should worship God scripturally and spiritually; not worship Him in the flesh.
4. If you will notice Revelation 4 and 5, there are four songs they sing. The first one is Rev 4:11, "Worthy art Thou, our Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and are created." They praise God because He is the creator of the universe, because of His glory and His majesty in creation. How many of our songs today express glory and honor to God because He is the creator of the universe?

Rev 5:9-10, is a song of gratitude for new, unexpected, and underserved blessings. It talks about our position and our privilege of being kings and priests reigning upon the earth after we have been redeemed, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for thou was slain, and purchased for God with Thy blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou has made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

Rev 5:12, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

Rev 5:16, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."