

“The Throne and the Lamb”

Revelation 4-5

Detailed outline from the Sermon on August, 18, 2008

The Olympics – Opening Ceremonies and the whole experience has been marvelous. The story of Revelation might not be all there is to heaven. But like the opening ceremony in Beijing, its an extraordinary introduction.

The throne and the One who sits there (4:1-8)

- His appearance (much like Ez. 1+3. Is. 6:1-5) is like *jaspar* and *carnelian*. *jaspar* is blackish green; *carnelian* is red. They are quartz like in luster.
- Around the throne a *rainbow* (symbol of God’s glory and promise) like emerald. *emerald* is green.
- There are twenty-four other *thrones*. Twenty-four *elders* sit on those thrones. Are they the princes from the tribes of Israel? Are they apostles? Or are they the poor, the prosecuted, the disabled, the unborn – the least of these?
- There are four living creatures covered with eyes (all seeing). They have faces like:
 - *lion* (supremacy and awe?)
 - *ox* (strength and provision?)
 - *man* (ingenuity and likeness to God?)
 - *eagle* (soaring beauty?)
- From the throne :
lightning and *thunder* – a light show of splendor and power.
- Before the throne
seven lamps – for the seven spirits of God.
sea of glass – the floor.

What happened at the throne (4:8-11)

- The four creatures never stop saying:
Holy, holy, holy
Is the Lord God Almighty

who was, and is, and is to come

- This might sound a bit boring to some, but for them, an eternity spent doing what they love; what they're made for.
- The elders fall down, worship and present their crowns.
Whatever God has given them, they keep returning. Glory, status, wealth, love...
- The elders declare God's worth.
*The truth must be spoken. God is worshipped, not because. He craves it, but because it is **true**.*

Again, there is more to heaven, in my opinion, than this perpetual ceremony. But what if there isn't? What if our appetites shift in our new reality toward a more keenly felt hunger to make life about God?

The scroll and the big question (5:1-5)

- A scroll with seven *seals* – edicts of judgment on the earth.
- A mighty *angel* “who is worthy to open the scroll?”
- A loud silence and then weeping. How will he open the scroll?
- Remember the *Lion of Judah* and the *Root* of David. He is worthy to open the scroll.

*Revelation 22:16 - I am the **root** and the **offspring** of David.*

Isaiah 11:1 - A shoot from the stump of Jesse.

The lamb that had been slain

- A new look
7 horns. 7 eyes. A lamb looking like it had been slain.
- He takes the scroll
- A new song of deliverance
- A swelling fanfare
The voice of angels numbering thousands and 10,000x10,000.

Literal Symbolic/Metaphoric – I tend to take a simple, literal view. Believe what I have to believe and don't try to push the symbols too far...take the main truths and live in them.

Historical/Futuristic – I view the early chapters as historical for their obvious application in the 7 churches. Beyond that, I see the book as futuristic (and current...)

Instructional/Evocative – Again, the book is instructional in obvious ways in the 1st chapters. Then evocative. It engages our hopes, emotions, awe, wonderment, and humility.

A staged and triumphant ceremony

1. Dramatizes once and for all the eternal victory of God and the vanquishing of evil.
2. Establishes the sovereignty of Jesus as Son of God and champion of humanity.
3. Reminder of other realms and forms.
4. Gives John and every generation a sense of hope and wonder; evoking awe and eliciting reverence.

Recommended reading: Eugene Peterson, Reverse Thunder