



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 5:1-14

"The Christology of Heaven, part I"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Listen as we turn to Revelation chapter 5, verse 1 through verse 14. The subject for today, you'll notice is part one of a two part series, and the reason for that is this that this chapter really is such a magnificent chapter. It would not do it justice to spend just one Sunday morning on it, and so we're going to divide up the exposition into two parts. We'll take in the exposition today the first seven verses, and then conclude with the next of the seven verses next week, the Lord willing, but we're going to read the entire chapter through each time. Revelation chapter 5, in verse 1, the apostle writes,

"And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel" (Isn't that interesting, you know, have you ever seen any weak angels? The fact of the matter is you or I have never seen any angels, but you naturally read that and say, "What is a strong angel? Well, no one really knows. Perhaps the reference is to one of the archangels. One of the commentators has just suggested with a question mark, "Gabriel, perhaps?" But I thought that was an interesting thing that John should write "a strong angel." We know that he was a person who evidently had a big booming voice because that's what he does, he proclaims with a loud voice, but I never thought of angels being classified as those who

have weak voices, and those that have strong voices, perhaps we should think of someone like Gabriel) "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung," (That's the old English past tense usually now translated saying) "and thy sang new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God" (You notice I am making a slight change based upon probably the better Greek text) "redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests" (And probably we should add them.) "hast made them unto our God kings and priests and they shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts

said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."

You remember, of course, that the beasts, I am reading from the Authorized Version, is better rendered "living creatures" for they are not to be likened to wild beasts at all. Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father we thank Thee for the word of God and for this great revelation that Thou didst give to the apostle to pass on to us. We thank Thee for the way in which it is ministered to us. We thank Thee for the greatness in which it presents our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, and we especially give Thee thanks for him, and for the purchase that he accomplished by the shedding of his blood, whereby we have been redeemed and made kings and priests before Thee. We thank Thee Lord. We pray that by Thy grace, we may realize the privileges that have been put into our hands and, may our lives be lives in which we truly become affective priests.

We thank Thee and praise Thee for the blessings of life as well. We pray for our country. We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ, and we pray for the local assembly that meets here, it's elders and deacons and all who are associated in the work of the Lord in Believers Chapel. Give wisdom direction and guidance to those who have the oversight over us, and may the result be the glorification of Christ and the reaching of many with the gospel of his marvelous grace.

We pray for the sick, particularly Lord by Thy grace, minister to them, encourage them, and even in the trials of life be especially close to them and affective in their lives causing them to feel the blessing and presence of our triune God. We are so grateful Lord, we can look to Thee and know that Thou doesn't hear out petitions, and we look forward to the day when the glorious future that Thou hast planned and purposed for us

shall be ours in fact. We commit the meetings of this day to Thee. May Christ be glorified in them, for his namesake. Amen.

[Message] Our subject for today, as you will notice from the bulletin, is "The Christology of Heaven." The vision of the Creator Lord of chapter 4, now gives way to a very animated scene in which the throne of heaven invests the lion of the tribe of Judah with the legal authority to establish his dominion over the earth by judgment and his Second Advent. What this book represents is a testamentary deposition. Anyone in the ancient world seeing a book that was sealed with seven seals would immediately think of a will or a testament, and so we are given a clue as to the significance of it by the fact that it is sealed with seven seals.

One of the older German commentators in illustrating this point says, "Perhaps some of you will remember a long time ago when anyone received a letter with five seals upon it in Germany, it meant that there was money in the envelope. You didn't have to look inside. You knew that it was money," so a letter with five seals spoke to them of something specific. Well, in this case the seven-sealed scroll, for it was a scroll rather than a book, they wrote on scrolls in those days, generally speaking. That signified that it represented a will or a testament.

Now, it's very interesting that in this fifth chapter that we encounter not the Christology of the liberal of our day, men like John Hick or Hendrikus Burkhof, of the Netherlands, who have questions concerning the deity and soul savior hood of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. We don't meet the Christology of the mildly conservative theologians like Wolfhart Pannenberg nor even of inspired apostles, though of course what they say is absolutely true. What we meet here is the Christology of heaven itself, for we hear the angels, and they sing of the greatness of the Son of God. They know who he is, and they know what he has done. Only on earth is there perplexity, confusion and error. It's such a great confidence builder to read Revelation chapters 4 and 5. They

do belong together incidentally, it's one scene, but the way in which heaven sings of the greatness of the Son of God is most encouraging. It's through the lion lamb, the son, that God's kingdom is inaugurated as the fulfillment of the covenant promises. That's the primary point of Revelation chapters 4 and 5.

Now, we look at the seven sealed book, which John describes in the first four verses, this is a continuation now of the vision of chapter 4, the vision of a great heavenly sanctuary with the throne. Nothing is said about the one who sits upon the throne, but it's evident from chapter 5 that it is the father, the father God, who sits upon the throne. It is God the son who steps forward as the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the lamb to take the seven-sealed scrolls, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is signified in other of the smaller aspects of these chapters. So the vision of the great heavenly sanctuary with the throne and the angelic court present, John writes, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals."

Now, the fact that this book was written on both sides, the scroll, in an evidence of the fact that it contains a lot of information. Now, in those days they wrote on papyrus sheets, which were then stitched together, and the book of Revelation, for example, would have contained about fifteen of the papyrus sheets, and the fact that they are written on both sides, I say, is evidence of the amount of material that is found in it, and what of course we could think about is the remainder of the book of Revelation, for it contains the details by which our Lord, in the light of the covenant promises, assumes the authority that God has given him.

Now, we have said in the introduction, that this is a testamentary disposition, a will. It's a disposition of earth's affairs. In fact, what it contains is advance history of messiah's assumption of the kingdom for us, so that book evidently is the book of Revelation. The details are given in the remaining chapters of this book.

It was very interesting the way in which wills were consummated in ancient times. It was usually something like this. An individual of course, signified that he would like to write his will. The will was written. The testator would appear in the presence of seven witnesses, and then in the seven witnesses with them around someone would step forward called the *familia emptor*, that is the buyer for the family, a friend of the family, had to be a very trusted member of the family because the property was conveyed to him before the person died. That was their custom, so there would be a scales there, and then one of the members of the party would put a coin on the scales, it didn't have to be much in significance, but it had to represent the fact that this close trusted confidential friend of the one who was making his will bought the property, so he, the buyer for the family, would strike the coin on the scales, and then the will, which contained the property and the other things that would be left by the individual who would ultimately die, would be legally conveyed to this other party, the *familia emptor*. He became, in a sense, an interim heir of the one who was making his will. When of course the person died, then the interim heir would convey the property, according to the testamentary disposition, to the members of the family or to whomever the property was to be conveyed.

That was called [Latin indistinct], in Latin terms. It was the transference of property, but it was done before a person died. So here is, incidentally, the seven witnesses would seal the document, and thus the document became a seven-sealed document. That evidently is what we have here. "So John sees in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a scroll that was filled with material, and it is sealed with seven seals" Thus it's a testamentary disposition of the kingdom of God.

Now, at this time one of the strong angels whether it was Gabriel or not, I don't know, but he had a very powerful voice.

"And so with a loud voice he proclaims, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof. And no man," (John emphasizes this. He says) "And no man in heaven nor in earth neither under the earth was able to open the book neither to look thereon. And I was weeping much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book neither to look thereon." (So John weeps over the universal inability to execute the contents. There is no one who has the power and the authority to act as the *familia emptor* and purchase that which the document represents.) "No one."

Now, if you'll think for a moment what John is trying to tell us, or what God is trying to say to John and then to us, what he is trying to say is simply this. It is impossible for any human being to be the heir of the kingdom of God, of themselves.

Now, the reason for that is very simple. All men are sinners. Therefore no one is worthy to open the book. No one is worthy to become the heir. No one has the authority and power to become the heir, and to receive for himself or for others the kingdom of God upon the earth. From the pharos of the past to the mouths of the present, no one is worthy. From the scientists of the past to the scientists of the present, no one is worthy. From the professors of the past to the professors of the present, no one is worthy, and from the preacher and divines, if I were writing this I would put (gulp) from the professors and the divines of the past to the professors, divines and preachers of the future, no one if found worthy to open the book. This is something that only one person can possibly do, and that is the God man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, John weeps of course because at this point, it looks as if no one will inherit the kingdom of God. It will not come. The promises will not be faithfully administered by the Lord God, for no one has the power and authority to receive the kingdom. Someone has said, "But Christ is best seen by weeping eyes." And if that's true, then of course in this instance, it's good that John did weep because it enabled him to understand even better what it means to have a redeemer like our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. So

the triumph of the lion lamb is now described in verses 5 through 7, "And one of the elders saith unto me, stop weeping" (That's incidentally an accurate rendering of that word because he has just said that he was weeping much, and now one of the elders turns to John and says,) "John stop weeping: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

Hosea, writing in chapter 13 and verse 9 of his prophecy says of Israel, "Oh Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." (That finds illustration here) "All humanity, all man thou hast destroyed thyself but in me is thine help."

In the midst of the throne room the lamb stands. He stands silently. There are no loud self-assertions drawing attention to himself. As a matter of fact there are no references as far as the lamb is concerned to the wounds that he bears. In fact, he fulfill even in this instance.

Isaiah 42, verse 2, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard" The fifth verse goes on to say, "A lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed to open the book." So the elder restrains the apostle's weeping and says, "The lion is worthy," and the titles, notice the titles portray him as a marshal figure. He's "the lion of the tribe of Judah." Our thoughts, when we think of this, go all the way back to Jacob's great promises and blessing of the twelve tribes, and in Genesis chapter 49, in verses, 9 and 10. Jacob said,

"Judah is a lion's whelp from the pray my son thou art gone up. He stooped down. He couched as a lion and as an old lion who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a law giver from between his feet until shallow come and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

So as far back as the book of genesis it was stated that the redeemer, a "marshal redeemer," the powerful redeemer, the one who would overcome for us, will come from the tribe of Judah.

In Isaiah chapter 11, in verse 1 and 10 the same theme is picked up many years later. The prophet writes in verse 1 of chapter 11,

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse." (David's father) "and a branch shall grow out of his roots." And then in verse 10, "and in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the peoples. To him shall the Gentiles seek and his rest shall be glorious."

And so the idea of a Redeemer, a "Marshal Redeemer" one who would overcome in battle from the tribe of Judah is of course the story of biblical prophecy. The titles portray him then as a king with a universal reign, and furthermore with a reign that will touch all of the nations. A worldwide kingdom. Someone has said, "The lion is at home in a fight", and what we have is a fight with the forces of evil and the forces of darkness, and our Lord is set forth here under the name, the lion of the tribe of Judah, to indicate that he will overcome. He's the lion of the tribe of Judah, he is the root of David, and he has prevailed. Incidentally, when he says he is root of David, it means not simply that he is descended from David, but as a matter of fact he is the one who gives David his authority and power.

In chapter 22, in verse 16, the apostle writes along the same lines, "I, Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." So he's the root of David, but he is also is the offspring of David. He is David's greater son.

Now, John at this point, looks for the lion, but he sees a lamb. This I think is one of the great pictures of chapter and we read, "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne

and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood" (Not a lion but) "a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." He looks for a lion. He sees a lamb.

I think this is so interesting because this is a kind of new conception. In the book of the Revelation, the Lord Jesus set forth as the lamb is set forth by the use of a term that at one time was a diminutive, that is that it referred to a little lamb. Later on philologists believe that it did not have that sense of a little lamb, but nevertheless the sense of weakness or meekness, smallness, still in some way pertain to the word. Twenty eight times in the book of Revelation our Lord is called the Arnion. That is or the lamb, but not the common word, when John the Baptist said, "Behold the lamb of God which talketh away the sin of the world."

He used a different word. This word I say emphasizes the meekness of the lamb, and it's the word that is used in this book. Once it is also used in this book to represent the antichrist, and in this sense, that he was like a lamb. In other words, not the lamb, but he was like this same Arnion. Very fitting, I think, because he will be an artificial copy of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, so in addition to the majesty of the lion, we have added to it the meekness of the lamb.

In one brilliant stroke someone has said, "The central theme of Scripture is visually portrayed." A lion of the tribe of Judah. The root of David is now a lamb as it had been slain.

Now, I'd like for you to notice particularly that expression "as it had been slain." Now, that's the manner by which the lion and the lamb triumph. The lion triumphs not simply by virtue of his powerful strength, though of course he will do that, but on the ground that is for us when he triumphs for us, on the ground of the fact that he has given his life and shed his blood for purposes of redemption, so "the lamb is as it had been slain," but now the slaying is not simply a killing. The word that is used for slaying is the word that was used of the slaughter of an animal, or in other words the slaughter of an

animal that is sacrificed, so we are to think of a sacrificial lamb. That is one who is offered as a sacrifice.

Now, I said this is the ground of the celebration of heaven because notice the ninth verse, "And they sang a new song saying Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain." And then verse 12, "Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power." So when we read the strong angel crying out, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break the seals and inherit the kingdom of God" that is prophesied in Scripture, the one who is worthy, is the one who was slaughtered, so it's evident in John's mind and in heaven's mind that the ground of our Lord's successful inheriting of the kingdom of God for his people is found in the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross.

The reasons should be obvious to us. We couldn't inherit anything, were our sins not paid for, and so in this case it's on the ground of the slaughter, the sacrificial slaughter of the lamb that we shall inherit the kingdom of God. The celebration gathers around that, and there is a further that we ought to note. If you'll go back in the word of God and think about the lamb, your thoughts will go all the way back of course to the book of Genesis. You'll even think of Genesis chapter 4 perhaps, and then Genesis chapter 22 perhaps, but fundamentally to the Exodus where the lambs were slaughtered.

And then you may remember that the prophet Isaiah, in the 53 chapter of his prophecy, that marvelous picture of our Lord Jesus Christ writes, "He was oppressed. He was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is done so he openeth not his mouth." And then your thoughts will probably go on to the last Passover, the first Lord's supper, in which at the Passover time when the lambs were slaughtered, the Lord Jesus, as Matthew records it in chapter 26 in verse 26 through verse 29, "The Lord Jesus takes the bread, and then he takes the wine and said, This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many

for the remission of sins, and I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom."

Now, what was our Lord saying at that point? Well, he was simply saying this, that when the blood is taken it's the blood of the new covenant, and it's the blood that is shed for many for the remission of sins and further our Lord says, "This go on doing in remembrance of me." He was saying in affect the Passover service has come to its end. It no longer has vitality and life. Every time the Passover service was entered into by Jewish people after that night, it was an invalid service. The power had been gone from it, for the lamb has now been slain, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now, think of the tremendous claim of authority that meant. For Israel had been told that they were to observe the Passover throughout their days. Jesus standing at the last Passover, first Lord's Supper said, "From now on do this in remembrance of me." In other words, he claimed to be the Passover lamb.

Now, it's clear from the book of the Revelation, that John the apostle and heaven itself acknowledges that, that precisely what he is. He is the Passover lamb, and on the ground of the sacrifice that our Lord speaks about in that last supper, which is the means by which the new convent is ratified. We have the trough of the forgiveness of sins, and his death is a penal death, that is he dies barring the penalty of our sins. It's a substitutionary death, for we do not have to die eternally, and it's a sacrifice, that is it's one who gives up his life that others may live.

The whole Christian faith is built around that fact, and those who have argued most strenuously for the things of Christ have laid stress upon it. You can go all the way back of course to the earliest of the church fathers, in the first centuries following our Lord's work, and great stress is laid upon the fact of our Lord's sacrifice by those who were faithful men such as Arenius and Athanasius and still others. Then in the middle ages there were men like Anselm of Canterbury, who particularly argued for the satisfaction of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. He wrote a book called *Cur Deus Homo*

"Why God Became Man," or that Latin phrase can be rendered also, "Why a God Man," and he argued very strongly that all men owe a satisfaction to God, that is they are sinners, but they owe what they cannot pay, and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ is the satisfaction. He pays what we owe, but which we cannot pay, and he pays it for us.

He argued this in that significant work, and really I think every Christian ought to read it. It will tell you something about the way in which we arrived in the Christian church in the place where we are today. Anselm lived in the 11th and 12th centuries, a few years into the twelfth century, but he also wrote a little sermon on the Lord's passion, and he had an admonition to dying men, and I'm going to quote from this sermon on the Lord's passion, and the prayer that he offered at the close of it. This is the prayer at the end of the sermon,

"Lord Jesus Christ, the good shepherd who condescended to die for your flock acknowledge me among your sheep, and lead me to your pasture. You who drink the bitter from me enable me to share in your glory. Your punishments torture my conscience, and your torments my memory. For I feared to drink the potion you drank. The sins you bore were my sins. I, an obstinate slave, committed the crimes for which you were flogged. It was my debts that were paid by you. My iniquity was the cause of your death, and my misdeeds brought about your wounds. Alas, for my sins for which atonement had to be made by so bitter a death. Oh unspeakable mercy, that when satisfaction for guilt was owed by none but man and none but God was able to provide it, he showed his mercy by becoming man, and though he owed nothing for himself paid our debt by dying for us. Behold how God did not spare his own son, but delivered him up for us. Oh, the grace of him who does this. Oh, the holiness of that death. Oh, good Jesus. Oh, Holy Jesus. What shall I render for you? What shall I endure for you who endured so often and so much for me? The display of what you have done is the proof

of your love. What am I to do, who am the unworthy recipient of this love? How can I return this love? Take what is your own. Do with your servant what seems good to you."

Later on he says in that prayer, "I will rejoice because of the grace of him who delivered you up, and because of the love of him who died. If I do not rejoice, I am ungrateful. If I do not mourn, I am unfeeling."

Magnificent prayer for the 12th Century, and then speaking as a faithful shepherd he interrogated and gave counsel to a dying man. This is what he told the dying man. And I'm going to read the questions and the answers. The question, which Anselm posed for the man who was at the point of death: "Do you confess that your life has been so evil that you deserve eternal punishment?" And the answer comes: "I confess it." "Do you repent of this?" "I repent." "Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for you?" "I believe it." "Are you thankful to him?" "I am." "Do you believe that you cannot be saved except through that death?" "I do believe this." "Then do this while the soul remains in you. Place your whole trust in this death alone, and have no trust in any other thing. Commit yourself wholly to this death. Cover yourself wholly with it alone."

I like this expression that comes up. "Wrap yourself wholly in this death, and if the Lord God should wish to judge you say, Lord, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and your judgment. In no other way do I argue with you, and if he should say to you, It's because you are a sinner. Say, Lord, I plead the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between you and my sins. If he should say to you, It's because you deserve condemnation. Say, Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between you and my demerits, and I offer his merit in the place of the merit of which I owe and do not have. If he should say that he is angry with you, say," and just imagine this individual talking to the Lord about these matters and arguing with him. "Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and your anger."

That's really in essence what John is writing about. He's telling us that the lamb, and on the ground of his sacrifice, has made it possible for us truly to enter into the blessings of the kingdom of God.

Now, John then says after saying, "There stood a lamb." Did you notice that stood a lamb? You now if a lamb has been slaughtered you don't find him standing. You find him lying on the ground dead, but here is a lamb who has been slaughtered, and he is standing. It's obvious that the picture is designed to represent one who has suffered sacrifice, but who has been resurrected as our Lord had said back in chapter 1, "Fear not John, I'm the first and the last. I'm he that liveth, and I became dead, and behold I am alive forevermore. Amen. And have the keys of death and Hades." So he's the slaughtered lamb, but he's the slaughtered lamb who stands. The sacrifice is offered. The lamb stands erect and alive in the sight of heaven. The sacrifice has been accepted and the lamb, in his risen glory and power, stands ready to secure all of the blessings for which he has died for those for whom he has suffered.

And I don't want to pass by the expression, "having seven horns and seven eyes." Anyone who reads the Bible knows that the term "horn" is one of the great figures of the Bible for power and strength. Read the book of Daniel, for example, and in the seventh chapter you'll read about the he-goat and the ram the he goat representing Greece, the ram representing Medo-Persia and how they fight, and finally in that fight the ram with the two horns has the horns broken by the he-goat, which a notable horn the middle of it's forehead, and that figure designed to represent the victory of Greece, and perhaps of Alexandria, Alexandria particularly, over Medo-Persia, so having seven horns, seven of them, seven the number of completeness suggests the fullness of strength, and to have seven eyes suggests the fullness of knowledge, omniscience perhaps. Christ invested with the attributes of deity.

That's a note that we want to be sure to have in the redemption that he presents here. The lamb is the root of David. He is the one who has accomplished the sacrifice,

but he also is the eternal God. Never let us forget that. Do not fall into the language of talking about God as if that term belongs only to the Father, and then of the Son. You may use the term God just as accurately of our Lord Jesus Christ as of the Father. He is God the Son, and the same is true of the Holy Spirit, God the Son, God the spirit, God the Father, a triune God each of the persons of the Trinity possessing the being of God. The same being of God. The distinction is a distinction of personality between them. So don't fall into the language of talking about God and then Christ and the spirit. If you use those terms, and you can use them, be sure to use them with a conviction that the term God belongs to the Son, just as surely as it does to the Father, and just as surely to the spirit as it does to the Son and the Father.

Now, all of this is so important, and when we read that he had seven horns and seven eyes, the fullness of strength, the fullness of knowledge is designed to suggest to us that he has been invested, this lamb, with the attributes of deity. It's so important that he have the attributes of deity.

Listen my Christian friend. If what Christ does in forgiving our sins is not what God did, it's not finally valid. It's not finally valid. If God himself has not come to be one with us in the end carnation, then the love of God falls short of coming all the way to be one with us and is not ultimately divine love. If it was not God himself in carnate who suffered for us on the cross in making atonement, then the sacrifice of Christ has no ultimate and final validity. We are still in our sins. If Jesus Christ and God are not of one and the same being, then we really do not know God. Please remember that. That's what Jesus said when he said to Phillip, "Phillip have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me? He that have seen me have seen the Father, and how sayest thy then? Show us the father." We don't really know God if he and the Father are not one in the same being. For he then is some, that is the father, is some hidden inscrutable deity behind the back of Jesus of whom we have no certain knowledge at all.

As a matter of fact we can only be terrified if Jesus is not of the being of God because we face a final judgment, and it will be a judgment then apart from and without respect to Jesus Christ and his forgiving love and atoning sacrifice if Christ is not deity himself. Cut the bond and being between Jesus Christ and God, and the gospel message is an empty mockery. That's why the Christian church has from the beginning, the genuine believing Christian church, has fought so strenuously for the full deity of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Everything depends upon that, and if you can establish the claim that Jesus Christ is a fine person, a holy person, speaking in a very general sense, a good person, and he's offered a kind of sacrifice that ought to touch our hearts. If that's what you've established, then you've departed from Christianity, and it's not long before you have more than one such person, and you will fall into polytheism and all of the things that go along with it. That's what Athanasius fought for. That Jesus Christ was of the same being with God. *Homoousias*, not *Homoiousias*, not like God, not like his being, but of the same being, otherwise we are hopelessly lost. So this lamb, of course this is a figurative way of putting it, it has seven horns and seven eyes, the fullness of strength and the fullness of wisdom, and knowledge.

One final comment, we'll pick this up next week. You'll note that we read, "I beheld and lo in the midst of the throne and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as it had been slain." The centrality of the lamb of God in heaven, and that's what he should be in the church, in the ministry, that's why in the preaching of the word of God, now for over forty years, it has been my personal goal to present Christ at the center of everything that I would call the ministry that God has given to me. In the midst, in me, that's the way it should be. The orthodoxy has never meant much to me. I have to know about it, but it's never meant much to me. Existentialism, one of the great modern philosophies, has never touched my heart. Pannenberg, Hick, liberation theology, process, theology reduction, criticism, all of these things come and go, but they do not touch the strings of my heart. It's Christ.

I love that story of one of Napoleon's soldiers. He was struck by a bullet, but it was not fatal. He was being operated on, and a surgeon had his scalpel, and he was digging a little deep in the body of the soldier, and the soldier said something like, "Doctor watch out, if you dig much deeper you'll touch the emperor," Napoleon, he was that devoted to him.

Well, the seventh verse concludes with, "And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." The quiet conqueror at the steps of the throne from the hand of the ancient of days takes the scroll with the apocalyptic authority, the session of the triumphal rights over the empire of the thousand years, a marvelous dramatic act on the part of the Lord. He came, and John puts it that way in the Greek text he puts it, "And he came and he has taken." And he has taken, you can just see it transpiring before his eyes. "He came and he has taken the scroll of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne." Then eminence excitement stirs all of heaven. The cosmos, the cross and the crown are the theme of the cosmos, and they shout, "Crown him, crown him, crowns become the victors brow. Only on earth do they shout, Crucify him, crucify him."

Let me say one last word to you. If his cross is so highly regarded in heaven, can we not, should we not, trust it and him here below for the burdened, the cross provides deliverance by the sin bearing lamb, for the perplexed and omniscient God, for the hungry, heavenly manna, for the lonely a loving companion, for the lost, a way home to the Lord and to heaven, for the guilty, a cleansed conscience, and for all a communion with God himself. May God in his marvelous grace, keep our attention fixed upon the lion lamb.

If you're here today, and you've never believed in our Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you that this sacrifice is for sinners, and if by God's grace you've come in the light of the reality of your life and of the claims of the word of God to recognize that you are a sinner, this lamb is for you. Come to him, believe in him, trust in him and ultimately

there shall be conveyed to your hands by this triumphant lion lamb, the experience of life in the empire of the thousand years, and also in the stretching out of that kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth for eternity. Come to Christ, trust him, believe in him, become part of this glorious company who praise him, and acknowledge that he is the reason for all of their spiritual blessings. Let's stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for this magnificent chapter, a true insight into the Christology of heaven. Oh God, may we think thy thoughts after Thee, and the thoughts of that great angelic hosts of elders and living creatures and of apostles. For Jesus' sake. Amen.