



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Revelation 5:1-14

"The Christology of Heaven, part II"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] For those of you who may be here today for the first time, we are devoting two messages to Revelation chapter 5 in our exposition of this book. For those who may have listened to the series on Revelation given many years ago, you may remember, I don't expect you will unless you listened recently, that one message was devoted to Revelation 5, but I think that it justifies our two messages. It's such a great chapter, so today we will complete the study that we began last week. The study that we undertake today will primarily be involved from verse 8 through verse 14, but I'm going to read the entire chapter through again as our Scripture reading. 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 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 odors, which are the prayers of saints."

I am not going to say much about the prayers of the saints, except to make a comment now. Probably these are prayers of individuals down through the centuries who have prayed for the consummation of the ages, in other words, the completion of the program of God. To put it in very existential language, It includes the many times that you may have prayed as the Apostle John prays at the end of his book. "Even so come quickly Lord Jesus." And in the very next chapter, we have souls under the alter who are praying, "How long, oh Lord" (These are evidently those prayers for the consummation of the Kingdom program.)

Now, in verse 9 we read, "And they sang a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood some."

Now, let me say again this is, in the original text, a partitive construction, and so when we read that you have purchase to God by your blood out of every kindred tongue and people and nation. It's obvious that we should supply not all but some "out of", so "out of people, tongues, nations, kindreds" there have been some purchased. That's the clear indication of the language you'll find the commentators on the Greek text, particularly commentators such as R.H. Charles in *the International Critical Commentary*, wrote two big volumes on this passage agreeing that that is the point. Luther, when he translated this particular passage, he translated it in this way, "For thou art slain and hast

purchased men, *der Kaufmenchen*", he said, supplying that particular phrase for what John has written. So,

"By thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and 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 honor, 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."

May god bless this reading of his word, and let's bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father we approach thee through the lamb that was slain, and who now has been exalted to the right hand of the father in heaven as our great mediator and redeemer. We thank thee for all that he has accomplished for us. We praise thee for the grace manifested to us, the mercy shown to us in our misery, and the grace shown to us in our guilt. We are thankful and grateful, and today Lord, on the Lord's day, we worship the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We desire Lord that through this day and through this week and in the days that lie ahead, we may truly effectually, faithfully represent the one who loved us and gave himself for us.

We pray for the whole church of Jesus Christ today, and not simply the local body here, but we pray for all who have truly named our Lord Jesus Christ as their own Savior, have before him acknowledged their need, received him as their own God, father-given savior for their sins. We thank Thee Lord. We praise Thee for the sense of joy that is

ours and our innermost being to know that our sins are forgiven, and we pray Lord that by Thy grace we may acknowledge in all of the activities of our lives, the Lord Jesus Christ and his preeminence.

We thank Thee for this body of believers. We pray Thy blessing upon them. May Thy hand be upon us for spiritual good, and Father we pray for this country? We ask Thy blessing upon our President, upon those who are in the national government and our state and local government as well.

We pray for the sick, and for those who have asked us to pray for them. Lord we pray for them. We ask Thy blessing upon them. Minister to them and give healing in accordance with Thy will. We pray that thou'lt bless and direct and guide the physicians and the family and friends who are involved in the illnesses. We commit them to Thee, and father as we think about our own relationship to Thee, we confess that so often we fail Thee. We sin. We ask Thy forgiveness. We fail to witness and give testimony to our Lord, as we should. We ask Lord forgiveness, and we pray that Thou will give us motivation and direction, so that we, in the life that Thou hast given to us, as believing Christians may truly reflect what has happened to us. We ask Thy blessing upon us as we sing and as we listen to the word of God, may this particular experience be an experience that is edifying for each of us. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] The subject for today is "The Christology of Heaven", and this is the second of our series on this topic. The world is largely turned off by the organized church, yet remarkable still somewhat turned on at least to the man Jesus, but never, in my history at least, and that's a long history, has the world it seems been more unaware of the true identity of our Lord Jesus Christ. From time to time we see evidences of that.

A couple of years ago, when *The Last Temptation* came out, one saw again that the world does not have an understanding of the sinlessness of our Lord and of his impeccability. That is. that our Lord not only did not sin, but by virtue of his divine

personality he cannot sin otherwise there would never be any film such as *The Last Temptation*. When we read modern theologians, I've made reference to two or three of them in recent days, in our particular context here in Believers Chapel, we see the same evidence of misunderstanding of the person of our Lord, and of course, of his work because they are bound together.

His work gains its value by virtue of who he is, and so consequently if we are to truly appreciate what he has done, we must understand who he is, and then also his work is an affective indicator of who he is because if an individual can provide a satisfaction that is satisfactory for the sin of human beings, he must be more than a human being. For centuries the Christian church has proclaimed that. Long before Anselm, for that matter, but Anselm of course made it very plain and clear in his *Cur Deus Homo*. "Only on earth then is there any question about his identity and worth. In Heaven it's clear. They understand who he is and what he has done."

Revelation chapter 5 is one of the great scenes of the entire Bible, and surely one of the greatest of the scenes of the book that we know of as the apocalypse. We have a great heavenly scene. A sanctuary surrounded by angels, the living creatures, the elders, and other angelic beings evidently. We have a throne and someone seated upon the throne who is not described in either one of the two chapters, but his presence is there, for the angels give doxologies to him, as well as to the Lamb. We have in this great scene a scroll that is resting in the right hand of the one upon the throne, and then we also have the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the apostle, as he sees the scene, as he looks at the scroll, and as he's given understanding of what this undoubtedly means, for this scroll is a scroll sealed by seven seals.

And so he knows that this is a will or a testament or a testamentary disposition, as the rest of the book makes plain, a testamentary disposition of the affairs or of the history of the earth. He realizes the solemnity of the scene, but he also realizes, as he surveys the scene, that no one has the authority and power to come and take the scroll and open

it and bring into existence and guide the events that are describe therein to their successful conclusion, ultimately, in the kingdom of the thousand years or the empire of the thousand years, as I have been calling it, and then following that the time of new heavens and the new earth.

It is, in affect, an advance history of Messiah's kingdom for us. John's despair as he looks around, and he makes it plain that he wants to emphasize this, "No one was found worthy to open the scroll", for he repeats it twice, "No one was worthy", and because of the despair by that understanding, when he is told to stop weeping, that the lion of the tribe of Judah has won a victory that enables him to open the scroll. It's not surprising then that eminence joy follows, not only in John's heart but in all of heaven.

That is the picture that we looked at last week, and we saw from the earlier part of chapter 5, after John was told to stop weeping, that the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, had overcome to open the book and to loose the seven seals. He looked. He saw in the midst of the throne, and in the midst of the elders, a lamb standing, but standing as it had been slain. You would expect a lamb slain to be dead. This lamb, however, has survived death and is standing. Obviously, in the symbolism of this great chapter we have a lamb who had been slain, and clearly a reference all the way back to the Passover lamb of the Old Testament, perhaps, even as far back as the ram that Abram slue that Isaac might be spared, but at any rate back as far as the Passover, and this lamb slain has come again from the dead.

As our Lord states, in the great vision in chapter 1, when John saw him and fell at his feet, "Fear not John. I'm the first and the last. I am he that liveth. I became dead and behold I am alive forevermore."

Now, I want you to notice, for we were looking at this as the message closed last week, I know that's fresh on your minds, but as we were closing the message last week, the apostle had just written, I was calling attention to it that the lamb was in the midst of the throne, and that it is stated twice that he was in the midst. He is in the midst of the

throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, and I made the point simply by way of application, that as this heavenly scene is unfolding it's quite clear that the lamb is of central importance in this great vision, the centrality of the lamb.

And the application that I suggested to you was simply this, if the lamb is central in heaven then surely the slain lamb who now is risen should be central in the church. He should be central in the ministry. In other words, this is the kind of ministry that we should expect to hear. One of the dominant notes should be the slain lamb who is today alive at the right hand of the father, and more personally, he should be central in me. That is in my own existence. In my life, in my family, in my business, among my friends, he should be central.

Now, when the lamb comes forward in the seventh verse and takes the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a most dramatic part of the vision. It's evident that what has happened is that he has, by his cross and triumph, authority to take the scroll, to the unfold the seal, to break the seals and to successfully guide the great events that are set out in the remainder of this book to their triumphant conclusion, in other word, to the empire of the thousand years, over which he shall rule and reign.

It's not surprising then that enormous excitement arises in heaven when the lamb takes the scroll, and as chapter 6 begins, he will begin to break the seals. "I saw when the lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying come and see." So the remainder then of the Book of Revelation will give us an insight into the contents of this testamentary disposition. The shouts of praise are three fold.

Now, as a preacher I didn't make that up. You might think any time a preacher says there are three points here, you can look for one to be forced perhaps a little bit, but this is very plain in Heaven they like three points too, evidently, because here when he takes the scroll there breaks out a three fold praise in heaven. First, "the song of the creatures and the elders," in verses 8, 9, and 10, and then secondly, "the shout of the

angelic hosts," in verses 11 and 12 and then the saying, it's simply a saying according to John's text, the saying of "the whole creation" in verses 13 and 14. Someone has said, "Heaven is the homeland of music," and that's probably true.

This past week I read a fairly lengthy article by the professor of music at one of our leading Christian colleges, and it was on Johann Sebastian Bach's "St. John Passion". A remarkable article because it manifested a great deal of understanding of Christian theology, and he commented upon the fact that Jaroslav Pelican an outstanding Christian historian wrote a book two years ago called "Johann Sebastian Bach Among the Theologians", and the point of it was that this man was not simply not just the master that he was in music but also a credible theologian, and if you have listened to the "St. John Passion" you'll know that there are two themes that stand out.

First, the theme of the satisfaction that Christ has rendered in his death on the cross, and then secondly, against the background of the classic theory of the atonement, as it is often called by theologians, that is the theory of the atonement that lays stress upon our Lord's over coming of Satan and the angels, that is the fallen angels, and that is found in that marvelous work. It is a marvelous work, and the various parts of it do glorify our Lord and Savior. And when finally in that particular work our Lord cries out *Est vorbracht*, or "It is finished," one can sense the greatness of Bach's presentation of the ministry of Christ, but let me just say this, I would imagine that when we got to heaven that we will be signing things even greater than those magnificent works that have been offered by our great men down here upon the earth. If heaven is the homeland of music, I'm looking forward to hearing.

It's interesting too the way these three outbursts of praise are written by John, of course he's just simply describing what he saw, but you can see that it is very much like a roman candle, and we've seen a number of them in the recent days. You've seen the roman candles shoot in the sky and then the explosion, and the stars fall, and then another explosion, and then another explosion perhaps to make a magnificent display,



and that's apparently what we have here, for we have the elders and the living creatures expressing their praise and the angels and then the whole creation like a tremendous spiritual roman candle of praise.

Now, we're going to look at those, the song and then finally the saying, and first of all, in verses 8 through 10, the apostle writes of the song of the creation of the creatures and the elders, and if you'll notice they'll sing the worth of our Lord in all ages. They will sing about his worth in the past. They'll sing about his work in the present, and they will sing about his worth in the future. They say,

"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the book and to open the seals thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast purchased to God by Thy blood." (and we will add some or if you wish, men in the generic sense) "Out of every kindred tongue and kindred tongue and people and nation".

Now, we don't have to go over this again. You were here last week, most of you, and you know that this expression that, "the lamb of God was slain and has purchased", is a reference to his penal death, that is he died under the penalty of the sins of men, further that it is a substitutionary death that we should have died, but he died instead of us. He died as our representative. He died as our covenantal head. Incidentally, Bach makes that point over and over in the *St. John Passion* of how he was bound that we might not be bound and so on. And then also it is a satisfaction that is the Lord Jesus Christ in his sacrifice in his blood has satisfied the claims of a holy and righteous God against us, and as Anselm pointed out it was something we must do but we did not have the power to do and someone else for us, and our Lord Jesus Christ is the one who has done it for us.

That's the story of the gospel. That's why it's so marvelous as a gospel. It is good news that men who cannot save themselves do have a Savior to whom they may appeal and expect to find full, free forgiveness and justification of life. So it is a penal

substitutionary satisfaction, and I would like a minor emphasis this morning, we don't have time to deal in detail with this, to say that also it was particular, a particular redemption.

Now, if you'll look carefully at the ninth verse, he says, "For Thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by Thy blood." Most of the translators supply the words either "men" or "some". Luther supplied the German word *Menchen*, which means something like mankind, but it's a supply because of the partitive construction in the original text. Take my word for it. It's true. After forty years of teaching New Testament Greek exegesis. Jesus, I assure you there is no doubt about it whatsoever, it is a partitive construction. That is a reference is to some out of the whole, a part out of the whole. So he does not say he has redeemed to God by Thy blood, every kindred tongue and people and nation, but "out of every people tongue and nation." In other words, there is a selection, a part of the whole that is the object of the redeeming work.

Now if you should say to me, "Well, we know that some should be lost. Is he not simply talking about that?" No, because the very next verse says, "And hast made them unto our God kings and priests." In other words, everyone who is the object of the purchase is also effectually made a king and a priest, and surely you're not going to be universalists are you? No, you know that that is not true. So everyone who has been purchased has also been made a priest and a king, and I won't say anything more about it. I don't want your blood to rise, become hot and angry because there are other things that are very important in this great passage, but I want you to think about it. It's evident then, I think that what John says is harmonious with a particular redemption.

Now, the thing that I would like for you to notice, especially in the light of what has been said is that the angelic hosts know where to put the crown. They do not put the crown on man. They put the crown on the son of man, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Ask those angelic hosts how men are saved, and from their own language that they would say, "The glories that men who are saved have are not due to the individuals.

They are due to the lamb who was slain," or if you were to say to the elders and the living creatures, "Where did the faith come from by which this vast multitude was saved? Did it come from them?" they would say, "No a faith did not come from them. It was the gift of God." For after all the apostle wrote, "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit."

That's what Augustan pointed out in order to make that point. "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit." We cannot do it of ourselves, and then Paul, in a great passage says, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God," and when he says that, "Not of yourselves," he means the whole procedure, the whole saving procedure. The grace is from God. The faith is from God. The salvation is from God. So ask those angelic beings where did the faith come from, they would reply, "The faith as everything else has come from God." Well, does not the faith come from free will? "No it does not come from free will. It comes from God," they would say, and if you ask further, "From whence do all of these blessings come?" They might say, "In yonder fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins, Immanuel the lamb." It's from him that the salvation comes

Now, I say to you that when a person comes to realize that, and realize it in the personal sense, you can be sure he not only is a Christian man, but he has a concept of the grace of God, but not until then, and you'll find that whenever the grace of God is proclaimed his heart will be touched. In fact, occasionally you might see a little tear stream down their face because the saints appreciate it.

This past week I read more than one book, but one book I read on Friday was a book by John White, a well-known Christian psychiatrist, and in this book he told of an encounter that he had with a man in whom he calls in the account Howard. He was in a general hospital at the time serving as a psychiatrist, and he was actually serving under another psychiatrist, but together they were ministering to people who had been admitted, and this man was admitted and diagnosed as suffering from psychotic

depression, and he said, "He and his supervisor both came to the conviction that he needed medication, and so they gave him anti-psychotic and anti-depressant medication and for weeks.

He says "There was no improvement, and so then we administered ten electro convulsive treatments," he said, "Still nothing happened. Then one day he said the young man, and I were together and one of those mysterious doors opened in which you find yourself facing somebody naked spirit to naked spirit." That's the way I used to face my mother when I had something wrong or my father, and that's not a very pleasant thing, but this was more pleasant. He said, "He began speaking to me about having drunk a bottle of beer that his doctor had said he shouldn't drink because it would aggravate and ulcer that he had had, but they kept on talking," he said "That was weighing him down quite a bit out of all proportion."

Dr. White said, "To the course of its real seriousness, but a more significant problem emerged in which there was more serious reason for disturbance." He said, "He had avoided enlisting in World War II, yet many of his friends had gone, and some of them had been killed, and this was weighing on him hugely. What about forgiveness?" the psychiatrist asked him. "I want it so bad," the young man said. "What's your religion?" "Russian Orthodox." "What does your priest say about how you get to be forgiven?" "He doesn't talk too much. We go to confession." "And what does that do" "I don't often go." "I grope for words," the doctor said, "but if you do go why would God forgive you?" "Because Christ died. He shed blood." "So?" "But I'm too bad for that."

"Unaccountably," the psychiatrist said, "Unaccountably, I grew angry. No logical reason. It just happened. What do you mean you're too bad?" "His voice," he said, was rising just like my voice." "I don't deserve ever to be forgiven." "You're darn right you don't," the doctor said. That doesn't sound like a psychiatrist does it. That's what he said. He said, "He looked up at me somewhat surprised, and he said," "I can't be a hypocrite. I got to make amends." The doctor said, "It may seem hard to believe, but I found my

anger increasing. And who do think you are to say Christ's death was enough for you? Who are you to feel you must add your miserable pittance to the great gift God offers you? Is his sacrifice not good enough for the likes of you?"

He said, "We continued to stare at each other, and suddenly Howard began to both cry and to pray at once. I wish I could remember his exact words," the doctor said, "but something indescribably refreshing about the first real prayer a man prays, especially when he doesn't know proper prayer talk. As nearly as I can recall he said something like this," "God I didn't know. I'm real sorry. I didn't mean to offend you." "More sobs, tears, running nose. I passed him a box of Kleenex," the doctor said. "God thank you, it's amazing I didn't know it worked like that, I thought, but God I don't know much. Gee, God I don't know how to say it, thank you. Thanks an awful lot. Gee, God thank you." You know that's the difference in saying Christ died for sins, and Christ died for my sins and the kind of response to them that we should have.

Well, the doctor prayed he said, "His prayer, his normal fluency a little hampered by his emotion while he mopped up his face with Kleenex." He said, "His eyes were shining when he shook my hand." "Thanks doc. Thanks a lot. How come nobody ever told me before?" He said, "During the following week I purposely refrained from doing more than bidding, good morning, how are you, when I saw him." He said, "I was very interested to see what the books would say about it, and the nursing logs indicated that the things that they had found before were rapidly disappearing."

The notes on his chart read, "Remarkable improvement. No longer seems depressed. Paranoid ideation not expressed. Making realistic plans for the future". He said, "We took him off the medication at that point. Then a week later he grabbed me and he said," "Look I've got to talk to you doc". "We went to my office, and the first thing he said as he sat down was," "It's as though all my life I've been blind doc. Now I can see". "He hadn't heard any evangelical phraseology, and didn't know that he was quoting from a hymn. He was a man who was essentially a religious being. He was no different

from other beings because human beings are religious" was his final word. Well, I say to you that when you read a passage like this, and you read about the lamb that was slain and purchased "out of every kindred tribe, tongue and nation", and has made them kings and priests, we are talking about the real thing.

Well, his worth is related to the past. His worth is related to the present, and has made them unto our God, kings and priests. The blessing of a royal priesthood. O my Christian friend, what privileges we neglect. What privileges we neglect. Not simply a priest, a royal priest. The privilege of entering the presence of God and speaking with him, knowing that he hears, knowing that he is our God to whom we may unfold all of the problems and trials of life.

Thinking about this last night, when Martha had gone to bed, I got down by the sofa in my family room, and just there spent some time worshipping the Lord, reflecting upon what a great privilege it is to be a priest and speaking with the Lord along those lines. I encourage you, probably most of you do that, but I encourage you to continue to do it. You'll find that God does make himself known to us as he is found in Holy Scripture. His worth is also related to the future, so the living creatures and the elders say, they say in verse 10, "And they shall reign on the earth."

Now, this is the final answer to the disciples question in Acts chapter 1, in verse 6, when they said to our Lord, "Lord, will Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (No not at that time, but there is to be a restoration of that kingdom to Israel, and here we read.) "They shall reign with him upon the earth", and so in the light of these statements of our Lord we affirm he shall reign on the earth, and they shall reign with him on the earth.

Now, if my friends say to me, "That's a carnal hope," I can only say, "That's what Scripture says." If they say to me, "It is a sensual hope," I can only say, "This is what Scripture says." If they say, "That is it unspiritual," and some might try to turn me from the blessed hope of our Lord's coming and ruling and reigning, I can only say, "It's in the

Scriptures." Shall the saints in glory shout? They shall reign on the earth and we be accounted heretics for believing they knew what they were saying in John's vision. Shall we be called fanatic, and a Judaizing person if we believe the things that are stated in the Scriptures that we shall reign upon the earth, so I must say, I cannot help but speak. I cannot be silent on that subject. Incidentally, those words that I just spoke to you, were largely taken from a Lutheran commentator, very interesting, but that was his viewpoint as well.

Well, following this there is the shout of the angelic hosts in verses 11 and 12,

"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 honor and glory and blessing!"

Why should the angels be concerned about this? Well, for the simple reason that the angels are interested in prophecy. In fact, Peter tells us when he talks about Christian salvation, he adds the words, "That concerning those matters of our salvation, the angels desire to look into them," using a Greek word that means something like to look down into, so they are concerned, they're interested. In fact, one of two of the flunkies among the angels may be listening to what is happening in Believers Chapel this morning. I don't know of course, but the angels are interested in the prophetic word and the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrew when he extols the greatness of the Son of God in chapter 1 with those seven great citations from the Old Testament Scriptures says, "And when" (in the 6th verse of the 1st chapter) "And when he shall bring in again," (that is the second time, the second coming) "When he shall bring in again the only begotten son, then he shall say, let all the angels of God worship him."

In other words, there will our call to the angelic hosts at the Second Advent of Lord for the angelic hosts to worship the returning Son of God. No wonder they say, "Worthy is the lamb." And finally the whole creation joins in saying, in the last two verses, "Blessing, honor, glory, power be unto to him that sitth upon the throne and unto the lamb for ever and ever." That's a remarkable statement. A chorus of praise here then climaxes in this unparalleled fortissimo to the father and to the lamb.

Now, I'm going to ask you to turn in your Bibles to chapter 22 of this great apocalypse, and we're going to read a section. I'm sure you are at least broadly familiar with it. The apostle ends the revelation of the new heavens and the new earth and that great vision there at verse 5, and then in verse 6 of chapter 22, he writes,

"He said to me, 'These sayings are faithful and true.' And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show unto His servants the things, which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly. 'Behold, I am coming quickly! Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. And I, John, saw these things and heard them and when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.' (A natural kind of human response, and then we read) Then saith he unto me, 'See thou do it not. For I am Thy fellow servant, and of Thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. John, Worship God.'"

Don't worship men. Don't worship angels. Worship God, but I turn back to Chapter 5, and the angels worship the lamb. What shall I conclude? The lamb is God. He is possessed of the very being of God. That's what we mean when we talk about the trinity. We mean the father, the son, the spirit possessed the being of God. They differ in their personalities, in some of their relationships, but as far as the being of God is concerned the father is God the son is God the spirit is God. We all know that, I hope.



About nineteen to twenty years ago, a rock opera, remember, was published with a lot of response on the part of people. It had a marvelous little tune. I used to like to listen to it. I just liked the tune. “Jesus Christ Superstar,” and you remember the point of one of the parts of it that I particularly like is, “Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ who are you? What have you sacrificed?” over and over again, “Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ who are you? What have you sacrificed?” Heaven knows who he is, even if we don't. They know what he has sacrificed, and they shalt crown him, crown him, crowns become the victors brow, he's worthy in their language.

If you don't remind me repeating an old story that I have repeated more than once here in Believers Chapel, I try to space it out five or ten years, so you've forgotten about it, but you may remember that Charles Lamb had an experience that I've referred to more than once. He and some of his fellow masters of English literature gathered and often gathered together and had some good times together, discussed their craft and other things as well, and it is mentioned that they, suddenly someone thought of the fantasy of ‘What would we do if great personages appeared in our midst?’ and so they began to name off individuals, great men of the past. What would they do if that person appeared in their midst? What would they say? How would they respond? And finally inevitably it came to someone saying, ‘What would happen if Jesus Christ were to appear in our midst?’

Now, Mr. Lamb stuttered, and I'm not an expert at stuttering, so I'll just ask you to put it in the language of a stutterer, and he immediately spoke up very obviously, emotionally a bit disturbed over it and he said, “If Jesus Christ should appear in our midst, we'd all fall down and worship”. That's true. We would. We Christians would. So let not his assembly disappoint him.

Yesterday I read a quotation that was rather interesting. Fredrick Buechner points out that it's rather strange that God should embody him in a sense in the believing family. He says, “He marvels at God's folly, to choose for his holy work in the world lamebrains

and misfits and nitpickers and holier-than-thous and stuffed shirts and odd ducks and egomaniacs and milk toasts and closet sensualists. This is what God in his folly has chosen to represent him." Are there some of you who would like to raising your hand and say, "I don't belong in that crowd?" Well, I don't see your hands. You probably would say, 'No I don't belong in that crowd, but there's another one he left out' perhaps.

Dorothy Sayers has said, "God underwent three great humiliations in his effort to save the human race. The first was the incarnation, when he took on the confines of a physical body. The second was the cross, when he suffered the ignominy of public execution. The third humiliation is the church. In an awesome act of self denial God entrusted his reputation to ordinary people." That's true. We are his representatives.

His work doesn't depend on us mind you. If we fail, he will accomplish his work, but he's given us the privilege of representing him, and so as believing Christians, you and I and others, let us remember that in our daily life, in our relationships in our business, in our relationships in our business, in our relationships with our wives and husbands, in our relationships with our children, and in our relations with our neighbors and those we do not know, we are the body of Christ.

May God help us to respond accordingly, and if you are here today and you've never believed in our Lord, I remind you of what Scripture says, "He was slain and has purchased to God out of every kindred tribe, tongue and nation," and he has given his gracious salvation to those who acknowledge their lost condition and appeal to him for salvation. May God in his grace help you to believe the gospel message and respond in truth. That simple response of, "Thank you, oh God, Thank you" may be the beginning of life for you. May we stand for the benediction?

[Prayer] Father we are so grateful to Thee for all that thou hast accomplished for us through the dying lamb, the Passover lamb, our lamb, the lamb that was slain for me. Lord if there should be someone in this audience who has not yet lifted his heart and

given Thee thanks for the death of the lamb for sinners, may at this very moment, that  
transpire. May this week also be a week in which by Thy grace we represent Thee  
affectively.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.