



This last Thursday morning, one of my daughter's said, "Oh dad, I have to tell you something cool I learned in discipleship group last night related to John 10." When we got in the car, on her way to school, she told me that one of the leaders talked about in her women's group another woman made a connection between the scenario in chapter 9 with the teaching of Jesus in chapter 10. In chapter 9, there's a man born blind that Jesus gives sight to. But the miracle is done in a somewhat strange way. Jesus makes mud with his spit, puts it on the guy's eyes, and then tells the man to go wash. The man still can't see, but he can hear Jesus' words. He hears, and follows through. When he goes to get clean, he can then see. Later, Jesus appears to him and reveals himself as the Messiah – and the man puts his trust in Jesus.

In chapter 10, Jesus teaches on how he takes care of and keeps all who trust in him. He's the greatest and best shepherd of his sheep. As a part of this teaching, Jesus says that his sheep hear his voice. What does hear mean? It means to listen, leading to belief and action. How do we know this? Well, the blind man could only hear. Having ears to hear, he listened. Then he went to the water for cleansing. Then he saw Jesus, and upon hearing Jesus' voice and seeing him, he believed.

This progression of **hearing/seeing → believing → proclaiming** appears throughout the Scriptures. The apostle Paul puts it in shorthand form in Romans 10: **How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher?** ¹⁵ **And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.** ¹⁶ **But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message?** ¹⁷ **So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.** ¹

Do you hear the progression in Romans 10 of **hearing/seeing → believing → proclaiming**? Now, let me explain to you why knowing this matters to Palm Sunday. This morning, we're going to read the apostle John's narrative of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem the week before his death. And then we're also going to conclude our series through part of Revelation, by looking at Revelation 4-5. As you think about our study in Revelation, there is a repeated phrase that John writes for each of the churches we've looked at: **"Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."** ²

The Spirit is preaching to the churches. The church has a preacher: the Spirit. Now, will they listen? The hope is that each church would hear the message that God has for them. But with all the churches, the call is the same: turn from any and all sin and be reintroduced to Jesus so that you truly and genuinely

¹ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Ro 10:14–17.

² [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 3:22.

believe on him above and beyond the world and your own temptations. If you see Jesus and his love for us and his power over all injustice, and you are one of his sheep, you will hear his voice and turn back to him!

Now, what does this have to do with Palm Sunday? Well, as we enter into chapter 4 of Revelation, we read these words in verse 1: After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.”³ This movement into chapter 4 is a segway further into Revelation when judgment of the world and rescue of God’s children comes in. This far in Revelation, Jesus speaks to the churches, calling them to turn to him. This is the hearing. Then Jesus gives a vision of himself – which I believe is to bolster the church’s confidence in Jesus (even while the world might look like it’s winning and going to just continue on in sin). Isn’t that how we can think about the passion week events? Jesus’ taught who he was. Then Jesus reveals who he is by riding, like a King, on a donkey into Jerusalem. And while the events are going to get worse, he is King – even if he is put to death! This is what we see in Palm Sunday to Easter. And this is what we see in Revelation 4-5. In both scenarios, people should say: **We have heard, and we have seen, and thus we believe Jesus – no matter the trials of this life.** So, let’s read the Palm Sunday narrative, and then we’ll go from there to Revelation 4-5 and make application for us.

If you have your Bibles, please turn to John 12:12-16: ¹²The next day, when the large crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, ¹³they took palm branches and went out to meet him. They kept shouting: “*Hosanna!* Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!” ¹⁴Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written: ¹⁵Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion. Look, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt. ¹⁶His disciples did not understand these things at first. However, when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him. ⁴

Can you imagine what the disciples were thinking at this moment? The Scriptures reveal elsewhere that the disciples expected that the eternal Kingdom was coming real soon. People are accepting Jesus as the King – the prophesied serpent crusher who was going to end all sin and brokenness. He’s revealing his glory to the people and the people are responding with worship of Jesus. Yet at the same time, here in John, we’re told the disciples didn’t really understand all this until after Jesus ascended to Heaven. Why not until he ascended to Heaven? I think that connects us with Revelation 4-5. It’s because Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem 2,000 years ago is just a small picture of a future day – a day when Jesus restores not just the city of Jerusalem, but the entire cosmos.

But the words of the prophet Zechariah are true then and now: Fear not! Why would we fear? This world is broken. Sin sometimes looks like it’s winning. And for the people hailing Jesus, they had no idea that within less than a week, Jesus’ lifeless body was going to be in a tomb. Had Jesus won on the cross or was he rejected by God? Similarly in the time of John. The churches have experienced brokenness. Is Satan winning or will Jesus win? They need to repent and see Jesus afresh. Jesus reigns and has conquered. And, this message is the same for our time: we can experience the temptations of sexual sin, idolatry, spiritual exhaustion, confusion, lovelessness, and so much more. Has Jesus won? Is Jesus coming again? Will there be a resurrection to come? Absolutely! And Palm Sunday reminds us of this and points us straight into these two chapters of Revelation. So, **will we today not only hear but also**

³ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 4:1.

⁴ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Jn 12:12–16.

see the glory of Jesus, asking that his glory would increase our faith? Take a few moments to pray that the Lord would show you (and us) his glory.

Chapter 4 Throne Room Vision:

Chapters 4-5 have a lot in them, and I'm not going to parse and define everything in these chapters. Instead, what I want to do is read the throne room visions, and then comment more on the praises of the angels and creation. The throne room visions compel the praise! And I pray that the praise of Heaven would be our belief and conviction as we live in this 21st century. As I read the throne room visions, if it helps to close your eyes, close your eyes. If it helps you to follow along in your Bible, do that. What I hope is that you seek to imagine and see what is being described here. So, let's read the first throne room vision: ²Immediately I was in the Spirit, and there was a throne in heaven and someone was seated on it. ³The one seated there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian stone. A rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald surrounded the throne. ⁴Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones sat twenty-four elders dressed in white clothes, with golden crowns on their heads. ⁵Flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder came from the throne. Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. ⁶Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was also before the throne. Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were around the throne on each side. ⁷The first living creature was like a lion; the second living creature was like an ox; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings; they were covered with eyes around and inside. ⁵

Again, I'm not going to seek to describe everything in these verses. Instead, what I want to emphasize the majesty here. Have you ever experienced something that when you describe it to someone else, they are amazed, but you know they don't get it, and you just say, "You'd have to experience it yourself to understand"? I think that's what John is seeking to emphasize. Don't get lost in trying to figure out what jasper and carnelian and emerald mean. That might be missing the forest for the trees. Instead, recognize that John's vision here has so many similarities with the prophets of the Old Testament, like Isaiah or Daniel. He's in the presence of the glory of the Lord – and it's magnificent. It's glory. It's beyond what earthly words can describe. I feel like John would agree with the hymnwriter who said, "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing my great redeemer's praise!" Oh for a thousand tongues, and I might be able to describe the gloriousness of the glory of God's gloriously wondrous presence.

Now, in God's presence, we have ranks of angels. Living creations, elders. Who are they? What does that mean? I confess, I don't know! But I do believe they're angelic ranks. Do you see a glimpse of the Lord's glory? If so, then listen again. The angels preach to us through their praise. What's the praise of the angelic host? Let's continue reading:

Chapter 4 Throne Room Praise:

Day and night they never stop, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come. ⁹Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one seated on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne and say, ¹¹Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because you have created all things, and by your will they exist and were created. ⁶

⁵ [*Christian Standard Bible*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 4:2–8.

⁶ [*Christian Standard Bible*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 4:8–11.

Remember, this vision is given in the midst of brokenness, and also know that this vision comes in a place of Revelation where God will bring his justice to the world and rescue all who have trusted Jesus. The Christians need this vision to bolster this confidence, faith, and obedience. We need this vision. Now, if you have pictured and seen the glory of Jesus, our response should be the same as the angels. Remember when Jesus prays, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?” The angels can serve us as examples for us in how we ought to obey. Praise is part of that.

Do you hear what the angels praise the Lord for? There are two specific things. The first is that **God is**. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come! The same praise Isaiah heard. But what does it mean that he was, is, and is to come. This goes back to the name of God expressed to Moses. God is the I AM. In other words, we often try to define God in certain ways and then we can stick him in our box. Like, we can say, “God is love” and then we think we have him figured out. But this name “I AM” also can be translated as “I will be what I will be” or “I am who I am.” Love doesn’t define God. God defines love. Justice or patience or wisdom or any other characteristic doesn’t define God. God isn’t limited to any one of those things. God *is*. He always is. Whatever he is, he is! If I’m not making sense, maybe that’s good. This reality that he was, is and is to come reveals he’s outside of time. He’s uncreated and over all! Nothing limits him.

Isn’t that amazing?! Isn’t he glorious? The angels praise him for who he is! And so ought we. This world – and none of creation – can say we were, we are and we are to come. Only God can! He is holy, holy, holy! And, as the world experiences its decay under the curse, remember God is! And, if you have trusted in Jesus as your Savior, remember that this God is *your God and Father who loves you and has secured you*. Fear not, your king has come and is coming again!

The next truth that the angels praise God for is that **he created all**. “¹¹ Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory and honor and power, because you have created all things, and by your will they exist and were created.”⁷ God is worthy because of who he is and because he decided to create all things, and bring everything into existence! Look at this creation. Even with its fallenness, there’s so much beauty, isn’t there? The angels in Heaven see it. The whole earth is filled with his glory. We in Holland can go to the beach and see the vast Lake Michigan, the beautiful beaches. Or, we can go to Northern Michigan and see wonders unique to our state. But we can also behold mountains in Colorado or reefs in the ocean or tundra. We can study the miniscule world of our bodies or creation and see order in the midst of this chaotic world. God brought about all this and brought each and every thing into existence, and we’re told in the Scriptures that Jesus holds all of this together by the word of his power!

Oh Ventura, will we allow the throne room vision of Jesus to shape our minds? The brokenness of this world, the sinners continuing in sin do not change the reality that God is and that God created all! Who has more power? Who is over *this world right now*? Praise his name! Join with the angels daily and praise him for his holiness and his power over all creation. Let that reality compel your joy. But that’s not all we see. Let’s move into the next

Chapter 5 Throne Room Vision:

Follow along, listen, and/or close your eyes and picture this: Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides, sealed with seven seals. ²I also saw a mighty

⁷ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 4:11.

angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?”³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even to look in it.⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”⁶ Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.⁷ He went and took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne.⁸ When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb.⁸

In the midst of the praise, John looks around and saw a scroll at the right hand of the One who sat on the throne. The One on the throne is God the Father. This scroll is sealed with seven seals. Meaning, it’s closed perfectly. This scroll, according to chapter 4, is what is going to take place *after* the declarations to the churches. If you read further in Revelation, it’s the judgments to the world and God saving those who have trusted Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Now, the voice to John in chapter 4 called him through the door to hear what must come. But now there’s a question posed to the heavenly realm: Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? And John began to weep loudly because no one was worthy *anywhere*. Not only in heaven but on earth.

Why would John weep? Because if the scroll stays sealed, that means there’s no justice to come. There’s no judgment and there’s no redemption. Embrace nihilistic philosophy. Meaning, embrace that this world has no point to it if this scroll isn’t open. John weeps openly in Heaven. But then one of the angelic beings, an elder, tells him not to weep. Why? There is one who is worthy: the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David. This is prophetic in the Old Testament of the One who was going to conquer the brokenness of this world and restore all things. God promised that through Judah’s line, a Ruler would come. And this Ruler would also come from David’s lineage to rule not only over ethnic Israel, but over the entire world and creation – seen and unseen.

Now, imagine being John, weeping and then being reminded of Jesus once again. And the elder says that this Lion *has conquered*. This is past tense, Ventura. When did Jesus conquer? Way back around 30 AD when he died and rose from the dead. The people at the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem had no idea that he was marching in triumph to the cross. And that the cross would be victory. The churches in Revelation knew that, but clearly had forgotten. And, I dare say we here can forget that the cross is our victory, too. Jesus *has conquered* – and because *he has conquered*, that means he will conquer. The future is in his hands. He unbreaks the seals and guarantees justice and redemption. Praise God? Yes! Amen!

So, John turns and looks, and what does he see? He doesn’t see the Lion. Oh, how I hope we all see him. Listen to verse 6 again: Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

Your translation might say that he’s a lamb that was slain, but slaughtered appears to be more helpful. This is a unique word John uses here in Revelation. How picturesque is that word to you? And now, I want you to understand this point: for all eternity future, our Lord, our Messiah, our God-Man has chosen to be seen by us as a slaughtered lamb who is standing. Why? Because it was in his slaughter –

⁸ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 5:1–8.

his death on the cross – that he purchased all the blessings of our salvation. Without the cross, there’s no resurrection. And the resurrection was the confirmation that what he did at the cross actually was what he said it was. The cross of Jesus is where our redemption was purchased. It was at the cross, where Jesus was lifted up high, that he actually *was victorious!* And the resurrection was the Father revealing he accepted what Jesus offered in his death. How do we know this? Because on the cross, Jesus says “It is finished!” On the cross, he conquered!

Later, the apostle Paul says the message of the cross is foolishness and a stumblingblock to Jews and Gentiles. It’s the same today. But for those of us who see and savor Jesus, the slaughtered Lamb is our Lion! He stands victorious over sin and death. And he wants to be known as the one who took at the punishment, all the curse of this fallen world, on himself and he was victorious. Praise his name! And this leads us to

Chapter 5 Throne Room Praise:

Let’s start reading together at the end of verse 8: Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰You made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on the earth. ¹¹Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. ¹²They said with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing! ¹³I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! ¹⁴The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped. ⁹

Now, the praise moves from God the Father to God the Son! And Jesus is praised for essentially two things. The first is **The Lamb was slaughtered**. I’ve already emphasized this, but the heavenly realm confesses multiple times in this chapter that he’s praised because he was slaughtered. Yes, he’s worthy to open the seals of the future and bring judgment and rescue because he’s the One who conquered the curse by shedding his blood. He purchased people through his blood. The idea is a ransom. We were slaves to sin and under the punishment we deserved in the curse. Yet, Jesus died in order to take the death we deserved. In taking that death, he has purchased people. If you have turned from your sins and you trust in Jesus, you are part of his purchased people, amen?! Do you believe that? But Jesus not only forgives you of your sin, but he’s praised because:

The Lamb makes people a kingdom and priests who reign with God. From all over the world and throughout the ages, people have turned from their sinfulness and guilt and turned to Jesus. And in doing so, Jesus brings forgiveness and reconciliation with God and also makes us a kingdom. That means, we are his people who are part of his rule. And, as priests, that means that we worship and serve the Lord faithfully rejoicing in God.

This is exciting because Adam and Eve were created for God and to worship him, but they failed. We humans are made to worship God, but we fail. But there will be a day where we will naturally and forever trust and obey God because Jesus has conquered on the cross! And then we will reign with God

⁹ [*Christian Standard Bible*](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 5:8–14.

– not simply under him, but with him, on a New Heaven and New Earth. But do you also see the glorious vision of who Jesus is? The praise of chapter 5 says Jesus is worthy of glory and honor. Remember in the Old Testament that we’re told God does not share his glory with anyone else? Yet here, Jesus is glorified in Heaven! Why? Because he is God the Son. He is the I AM and he is the Creator who was slaughtered, taking the curse to bring cosmic renewal and restoration of people with God.

From Ephesus to Laodicea, the churches needed to see this vision because even though judgment was coming, and this world seemed to be winning – God is God and Jesus has conquered. The people at Jesus’ triumphal entry needed this awareness: Jesus is the King of the Jews. And even though he went to the cross, He truly is the King who is coming again. And for us, we need this vision in whatever we face. We are conquers through him who loved us and gave himself for us on the cross!

We too need this message. Like the disciples, we can understand this living after Jesus’ ascension. We can get it now! Palm Sunday points us to Jesus’ reign over everything – even though there’s crucifixion, even though there’s trial. Resurrection is coming because God’s glory and justice matters. God matters. And we are united with him!

So, do you hear Jesus’ words? Do you see Jesus? Do you believe? If so, join with the heavenly realm in praise. Let your tongues worship him. And finally, with the elders, would you say Amen and worship him? He’s been worthy. He is worthy. He always will be worthy! And as we live in these end times, will you then proclaim him together as a church to one another and this world?

“Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.”¹⁰

¹⁰ [Christian Standard Bible](#) (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2020), Re 3:22.