

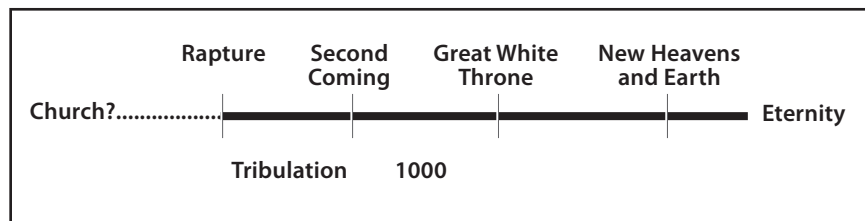
SESSION 2

(The Throne Scene—Revelation 4-5)

I. PRAYER/PREVIEW

II. PANORAMA MOVEMENT #12: TIMELINE

(Pre-millennial, Pre-tribulational Approach)



III. BOOK OF REVELATION

A. Broad Overview Chart

REVELATION														
Outline: "Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later." (Rev. 1:19 NIV 84)														
Chapter 1	Chapters 2-3	Chapters 4-22												
"what you have seen"	"what is now"	"what will take place later"												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salutation (prologue/greeting) • Vision ("have seen") • Outline (1:19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Letters to 7 Churches (historical) (representative) (prophetic?) 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Throne Scene</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Tribulation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Second Coming & Millennium</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">21</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Eternal State</td> <td style="text-align: center;">22</td> </tr> </table>	4	Throne Scene	5	6	Tribulation	19	19	Second Coming & Millennium	20	21	Eternal State	22
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6	Tribulation	19												
19	Second Coming & Millennium	20												
21	Eternal State	22												
1	2	3												

B. Topical/Chapter Chart (Pre-millennial View)

CHAPTER TOPICS OF REVELATION					
Events	Church Age	Tribulation	Millennium	Judgment: Great White Throne	Eternal State
In Heaven	1	4-5	19-20	20	21-22
On Earth	2-3	6-19	20		

* Taken from Ryrie ESV Study Bible, 1549

IV. FLOW OF BOOK OF REVELATION

(Occurrences of "Ekklēsia")

Vision (Christ)	Churches (Seven)	Throne Scene (Worship) (Heaven)	Tribulation (Wrath) (Earth)	Millennium Eternal State
1	2 3	4 5	6 19	20 22

"ekklēsia" (church) 19 times	"ekklēsia" (church) 0 times	"ekklēsia" (church) 1 time
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Rapture
("comes for saints")

Second Coming
("comes with saints")

V. BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT: REVELATION 4-5

Revelation 4-5 forms a bridge from the message of Christ to the Seven Churches to the descriptions of the Tribulation (in Rev. 6-19). As noted in the previous chart, "Chapter Topics of Revelation" (p. 18), the scene is no longer on earth with the churches but now in heaven.

The Throne Room scenario includes several important figures:

- voice of the Lord (ch. 4)
- seated figure upon the throne (ch. 4)
- twenty-four elders (ch. 4)
- seven-fold Spirit (ch. 4)
- mighty angel (ch. 5)
- Lamb (ch. 5)
- many angels (ch. 5)

A. The Throne in Heaven (4:1-11)

Eleven times in Revelation 4 the word "throne" occurs. The basic theme of the chapter is built around this sovereignty image.

1. The voice of One who summons (1)

Revelation 4:1

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

- a. "After this" refers to the messages to the seven churches. The term occurs also in 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1 and refers to a new vision (revelation) which follows (and the terms are likely chronological, sequential markers).
- b. John's vision will be heavenly, thus he sees "a door standing open in heaven." This invitation brings to mind other similar descriptions:

Acts 7:55-56

But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

2 Corinthians 12:1-4

I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

- c. The “voice” (Rev. 4:1) belongs to Christ. It was described “like a thunder,” which is how Christ’s voice is also described in 1:10-11.
- d. “I will show you what must take place after this” adds a futuristic note to the unveiling of new truth. From this point forward the described events are yet future to John’s experience (and to ours as well).

2. The enthroned One (2-3)

Revelation 4:2

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

- a. “In the Spirit” refers to the state which John was in during this experience. It may have been similar to Paul’s state as referenced earlier in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, a state whereby Paul confessed, “whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know” (v. 2).
- b. What John saw was Someone seated on a throne. The identity of this person is God the Father (see 4:5 compared to 5:5, 7; also note 6:16; 7:10; 19:4). The powerful vision brings to mind the experience of Daniel who saw both the Ancient of Days (Father) and Son of Man (Son) in transcendent glory.

Daniel 7:9

“As I looked, “thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze.

Daniel 7:13-14

*In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one **like a son of man**, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the **Ancient of Days** and was led into his presence. ¹⁴He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.*

3. The twenty-four elders (4)

Revelation 4:4

*Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were **twenty-four elders**. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.*

a. Described:

- Their number: twenty-four
- Their privilege: thrones (subordinate rule)
- Their appearance: dressed in white; crowns of gold

b. Identified:

Who are these elders? Three primary options include:

- (1) Angels (perhaps of high rank in a council of angels; see Col. 1:16)
- (2) Church (representative of and for the whole church)
- (3) People of God (12 tribes & 12 apostles are representative of the elect of all ages, both OT and NT)

4. The display of judgment (5-6^a)

Revelation 4:5-6^a

From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. ⁶Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass...

a. The stormy description speaks of pending judgment, one of irresistible power.

b. "Seven Spirits" or "Sevenfold Spirit" refers to the fullness of the Holy Spirit to carry out the judgment to come (cf. Isa. 11:2-3).

5. The living creatures (6^b-11)

a. Their description (6^b-8^a)

The “four living creatures” (or perhaps better, “living ones”) are angelic beings of high rank characterized as “covered with eyes” (v. 6^b and v. 8). The eyes “evidently symbolize their penetrating intelligence, and makes them immediately aware of whatever is happening that affects their judicial responsibility (cf. Ezek. 1:18; 10:12)” (Constable, *Notes*, 67).

Revelation 4:7-8^a

The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings...

These descriptions are likely symbolic of created life under God’s sovereign rule (though scholars differ widely as to the intended meaning).

- “lion”: untamed animals
- “ox”: domesticated animals
- “man”: human life
- “eagle”: avian life

If these living beings and their descriptions are indeed symbolic of creation, perhaps “they are what is noblest (lion), strongest (ox), wisest (man), and swiftest (eagle)” (Patterson quoting J.M. Ford, 136).

b. Their activity (8^b-11)

Whatever real or symbolic meaning is given to the “living creatures” (“living ones”), they fulfill what all of creation was intended to do... worship God.

Revelation 4:8^b

*...Day and night they never stop saying:
“Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.”*

Further, verses 9-10 indicate that the twenty-four elders join the living ones (angels) in falling down before God who sits in His throne, the undeniable symbol of His ruling authority over all that He has created. The elders “lay their crowns before the throne” (10).

The scene is reminiscent of other powerful worship passages:

Isaiah 6:1-4

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another:

*“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”*

⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Psalm 95:1-7^a

*Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.*

*²Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.*

*³For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.*

*⁴In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.*

*⁵The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.*

*⁶Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;*

*⁷for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care...*

Psalm 47:4-8

*He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.*

*⁵God has gone up with a shout,
the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.*

⁶*Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!*
⁷*For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!*
⁸*God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.*

Finally, a concluding doxology of praise ends the chapter.

Revelation 4:11
*You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.*

- Note that the song is addressed to God directly.
- Note the reference to creation, the sustaining power of creation, the purposeful action of creation.

Insight:

“We need to see all that follows in this revelation (chs. 5-22) in the light of the character of God manifested in this vision. God is perfectly holy, just, gracious, righteous, pure, omnipotent, eternal, and sovereign. This should help us to accept the coming revelation of all that He will do, including God’s judging of huge segments of humanity in the future.”

(Constable, *Notes*, 70)

B. The Lamb upon the Throne (5:1-14)

Revelation 5 continues the throne scene in heaven. From the earthly evaluation of the seven churches (Rev. 2-3) to the earthly beginning of the tribulation period (Rev. 6-19), the “throne scene” provides a bridge from the heavenly perspective (Rev. 4-5).

1. The sealed scroll (1-5)
 - a. Described (1)

Revelation 5:1

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.

- (1) "Writing on both sides" would have been typical of Roman legal documents as well as the use of "seven seals." Likely, the scroll is a title deed to the earth that details the future events of judgment to come.
- (2) Under Roman law, only one authorized to open such a document could do so.

b. Closed (2-5)

- (1) The question (2)

Revelation 5:2

And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"

- (2) The dilemma (3-4)

No one was "legally" qualified to open the seals. John wept that none was able, but why would he weep?

- God's purposes (as revealed in the scroll) are unknown (cf. 4:1).
- God's promises of a King and earthly Kingdom are uncertain, perhaps indefinitely postponed.

- (3) The reply (5)

Revelation 5:5

Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

2. The slain Lamb (6-8)

Revelation 5:6-8

*Then I saw a **Lamb**, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The **Lamb** had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

⁷He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. ⁸And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people.

a. The Lamb's description (6)

- "Lamb" (or little lamb): twenty-eight times the specific term is used of Christ in Revelation and once in the Gospel of John. Further, in the Gospel of John the forerunner declared of Jesus, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29).
- "Looking as if it had been slain": a reference to the visible scars of the Cross.
- "Standing": the Lamb was slain but now is resurrected.
- "Seven horns and seven eyes": horns speak of power; eyes of knowledge.
- "Seven spirits" (or Sevenfold Spirit): may speak of Holy Spirit fullness.

b. The Lamb's action (7)

He alone had the authority to open the deed, to enact the plans and purposes of God for the earth. He alone can and will bring it all to fruition.

c. The Lamb's worship (8)

Both angels ("living creatures") and man ("twenty-four elders") bow before the Lamb. The elders sing praises ("harp") and hold "bowls of incense," representative of the prayers of the saints – prayers that now will begin to be answered.

3. The worship songs (9-14)

a. The "new song" (9-10)

Revelation 5:9-10

And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased for God persons

from every tribe and language and people and

nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests

to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

- (1) The new song declares the worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll (9).
- (2) The new song describes four reasons why the Lamb is worthy to open the scroll (9-10):
 - The death of Christ ("were slain")
 - The redemption of people ("blood... purchased")
 - The priestly kingdom to serve God ("a kingdom and priests")
 - The coming Davidic Kingdom ("reign on the earth")

b. The angelic song (11-12)

Revelation 5:11-12

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. ¹² In a loud voice they were saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,

to receive power and wealth and wisdom and

strength and honor and glory and praise!"

- (1) The singing choir includes innumerable angels plus the living creatures and the twenty-four elders (11).
- (2) The Lamb is worthy and thus rightfully should receive the seven ascribed qualities that are rightly His: power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, praise (12).

(3) In light of the angelic song, note the contrasts which follow:

CHRIST...WORTHY OF WORSHIP	
Christ on Earth	Christ in Heaven
Worthy of death (Jn. 19:7)	Worthy of praise (Rev. 4-5)
Works...power of Satan (Matt. 12:24)	Worthy of power (Rev. 5:12)
For our sake...became poor (2 Cor. 8:9)	Worthy of wealth (Rev. 5:12)
Preaching of the Cross...foolishness (1 Cor. 1:18)	Worthy of wisdom (Rev. 5:12)
Crucified in weakness (2 Cor. 13:4)	Worthy of strength (Rev. 5:12)
You dishonor Me (Jn. 8:49)	Worthy of honor (Rev. 5:12)
Not seeking glory for Myself (Jn. 8:50)	Worthy of glory (Rev. 5:12)
Christ (became)...a curse for us (Gal. 3:13)	Worthy of praise (Rev. 5:12)
• Adapted from W. Wiersbe, "Whole Bible Study Course," Privately published, n.d.	

c. The creation song (13-14)

Revelation 5:13-14

*Then I heard **every creature** in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:*

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

¹⁴*The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

- (1) "Every creature" speaks of the whole of creation. This concept is advanced in the following passages:

Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth ¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Colossians 1:19-20

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Ephesians 1:18-21

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, ¹⁹and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, ²¹far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

- (2) The response of the angelic "living creatures" is "amen" (i.e. true, so be it, may it ever be so).
- (3) The response of the elders is to fall down and worship.

Insight:

True, Biblical worship can be theologically defined as (1) a true recognition of who God is, and (2) an appropriate response. The elders in Revelation 5:14 exemplify this definition.

VI. RECAP

A. Sovereignty

The heavenly scene reinforces the complete sovereignty of God over all things created and all events yet to come. Nothing is beyond His ultimate control/rule.

B. Worship

God alone is worthy of our full devotion and worship. To “bow the knee” to anyone, anything else, is to commit spiritual adultery and idol worship. He alone is worthy of “glory and honor and power” (4:11). He alone is worthy of our worship.

C. Prophetic Certainty

The Lamb alone was worthy to open the seals and to reveal what must/will take place at the close of human history. The Lamb is worthy and will ensure that all (promised) will come to pass as revealed in the Book of Revelation.

The modern challenge is to trust and obey that what God has revealed of the future will in fact someday actually come to pass.

Thus, in the words of one insightful, yet unknown believer:

We should live every day as if Christ were crucified yesterday, were raised today, and were coming again tomorrow.