

# (Worship) Session 4: Revelation 4 & 5

by Joseph Carroll

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*The sermon explores the majesty and glory of God, the significance of the 24 elders, and the worthiness of the lamb to open the book of God's secrets*

**Duration:** 52:22

**Scripture:** Revelation 4:1

**Topics:** "Worship", "The Majesty of God"

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## Description

Joseph Carroll explores Revelation chapters 4 and 5, emphasizing the majesty and glory of God on the throne and the Lamb who was slain. He describes the heavenly scene filled with worship, where the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders continually proclaim God's holiness and worthiness. Carroll highlights the significance of the rainbow around the throne as a symbol of God's faithfulness and mercy, and he stresses the importance of true worship that stems from a deep understanding of God's nature. The sermon culminates in the recognition that only the Lamb is worthy to open the scroll, representing God's ultimate plan for creation and redemption. Carroll calls believers to respond in worship and submission to the Creator and the Redeemer.

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## Transcript

I'm reading from Revelation chapter 4 verse 1.

After this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me which said come up hither and I will show you things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald and round about the throne were four and twenty seats and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment and they had on their heads crowns of gold and out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of God and before the throne there was a sea of glass like under crystal and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four beasts full of eyes before and behind and the first beast was like a lion and

the second beast like a cow and the third beast had a face as a man and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle and the four beasts had each of them six wings about him and they were full of eyes within and they rest not day and night saying holy holy holy lord god almighty which was and is and is to come and when those beasts gave glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne who liveth forever and ever the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying thou art worthy oh lord to receive glory and honor and power for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created in the first verse john is commanded to come up hither by this voice like a

trumpet the voice of our lord himself and to be shown things which must be hereafter then in verse two immediately i was in the spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne but john cannot even begin to describe the glory and the majesty of this one he sees on the throne god himself so he says in verse and he that set was to look upon like a jasper you see like a jasper and a sardius stone or it could be translated as a cornelian stone and we can be assured that the jasper was as clear as crystal possible or probably a diamond and the cornelian or sardine or sardius stone was possibly a ruby but a red stone and these two together speak of the glory and the sacrifice of god they speak of the glory and sacrifice of god now here we have a glimpse into heaven firstly

the one who sits on the throne and then the lamb in revelation 5 and an understanding of these two chapters is essential as an aid to true worship of the lord so we're going to spend a little time with them this morning then he tells us there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like an emerald a rainbow or the rainbow here of course speaks of the covenant keeping god that god is faithful that god keeps his word that god keeps his covenant a rainbow the rainbow that followed the great flood that god is faithful he's a god of mercy and it's instructive and wonderful to know that this rainbow round about the throne was like an emerald an emerald or green always speaks of mercy so here we have this wonderful being this wonderful person on the throne he is merciful john is trying to

describe him but no man have seen god at any time the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father he hath declared him you recall when mooses requested that he might see him what was his answer no man can see my face and live so god john here is trying to describe god but he speaks of the glory of god and the sacrifice of god and the mercy of god and the faithfulness of the one who sits on the throne then in verse four and round about the throne were four and twenty seats and upon the seats i saw four and twenty elders sitting clothed in white raiment and they had on their heads crowns of gold four and twenty thrones so you have the central throne and then you have these 24 thrones round about the central throne in other words the central throne and then these four and twenty

thrones occupied by the 24 elders now there are differing opinions as to just who these elders are but i believe we can be assured that they are representative of all believers and we shall see why as we continue our exposition representative of all believers and they are seated upon a throne now a throne speaks of authority of power of rulership of prominence and not only are they seated upon these thrones but they have crowns on their heads and the crown speaks of victory they are victors so i believe the picture here is quite clear in the center is the throne of god and round the throne are 24 thrones seated on those 24 thrones the elders who are representative of believers of all time then in verse five out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderclaps and voices now this can

speak and does speak of god's power or judgment lightnings and thunderclaps and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of god i want you to notice here that the

spirit of god is described under the emblems of fire that fire of the spirit that burns against all sin seven lamps of fire burning before the throne which are the seven spirits of god and this speaks of the sevenfold plenitude of the spirit's power but under the emblems of fire so we have the lamps of fire the thundering and the voices and this in the very center surrounded by these thrones now this passage can also remind us that god is a covenant keeping god the rainbow the covenant with noah the flaming torches the covenant with abram and the thunderings and lightnings the covenant

at sinai then we are introduced to a sea in verse six and before the throne there was a sea of glass like crystal and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne were four living creatures full of eyes before and behind this sea like as of glass is the better rendering and it speaks of the word of god and it is a great sea later we read of the martyrs standing on this sea like under crystal and this sea is before the throne it speaks to us or reveals to us not only the eternal character and purity of the word of god but also that of the distance that is always between the believer the worshiper and god himself this this great sea this vast sea before the throne why does it speak of the purity and the eternal character of the word of god it's there before the throne it also shows

us the distance that is always between the believer the worshiper and god himself now in our modern day we are apt to have an unholy familiarity with god you will never have that when you have an understanding of the book of the revelation an unholy familiarity with god i've always i've mentioned earlier that to some he's a buddy oh no he isn't a buddy buddy he's the great god of the universe and to some he is simply a a person who exists in order that he might save people on their terms and help them live the life they want to live and when they get in a little bit of trouble he will help them out this is the concept of god well this is not the god of the bible this is not the god of the bible he gave his son to be a propitiation for for our sins not that we might live a life that

pleases us but that we might live a life that pleases him this great one upon the throne and this sea be for him he is the god of glory then in verse 7 we read of beasts four beasts or four living creatures is the better rendering and the first living creature was like a lion and the second living creature like a calf and the third living creature had a face like a man and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle and the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him and they were full of eyes within and they rest not day and night saying holy holy holy lord god almighty who was and is and is to come these four living creatures represent creation they speak of creation all that is mightiest and grandest in creation the six wings and the eyes speak of incessant

activity and then we come to that passage we've already referred to of such vast importance in verse 10 the 4 and 20 elders fall down before him that sat on the throne and worship him that liveth forever and ever and cast their crowns before the throne saying thou art worthy o lord to receive glory and honor and power for thou has created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created now what is the response to this tremendous vision in heaven the response to a true unveiling of the glory and the majesty of god is always submission always why do people not submit to god because they don't know him he has never been revealed to them for example the need to constantly study the attributes of god his attributes what is he like people do not know god therefore they do not submit

to him but to know him is to immediately fall down in wonder love and praise and submission the first act is what we should know it by now the falling down before this one who is on the throne to worship him and we have seen they worship him because he alone is worthy we find it in the next chapter in verse 8 exactly the same thing again when he had taken the book the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell

down this time before the land having every one of them hops and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints so in revelation four there is the falling down before the one who is on the throne god himself in revelation five there is the falling down before the lamb the living christ to see god in his glory that is to have a glimpse of his glory is to submit

to him but to have a glimpse of the glory of the lamb of god it also means that one submits to him and just as there can be no true worship of jesus christ until there is total submission to jesus christ there can be no true christianity without submission the four and twenty elders fall down and they worship him worship is the worth ship ascribing worth to the one whom you worship and i want you to notice here they worship him because he is the creator this one on the throne is the creator thou art worthy oh lord or oh lord our god and it is not without significance that this was the very title claimed by the roman emperor at that time demission was was to be worshipped as lord and god and submitted to but there is only one lord and god and this revelation was given to those servants of

the lord who were suffering terribly at the time when this great revelation was placed in their hands they were experiencing terrible persecution thou art worthy to receive three things glory and honor and power and we have seen that these three things are the things that men want the things that cause wars but only the creator is worthy of worship only the creator is worthy of glory and honor and power who else could be worthy for only god can create man cannot create he can do a great number of things but he cannot create there is nothing we have that god has not given us he is the great great creator but how foolish we creatures can be at times instead of finding our all in god in worshiping him and yielding all to him we exalt man the story is told of a man who was seeking baptism and

he was to be baptized in a church where they immersed where the candidate was plunged beneath the waters and as he was about to be immersed he suddenly realized that he had his wallet in his back pocket so he said to the pastor he said pastor hold my wallet he said oh no it goes with you your wallet goes with you and down it went with him yes my friend when you come to christ everything comes with you your children your wife or your husband your assets everything he's a very dear servant of the lord he was a missionary in africa until illness caused him to return home dr paul white he has written a number of classics on missionary service in africa he's also a most acceptable speaker and on one occasion he gave a message on what it means to be a christian he said it's something like

joining a club it costs you nothing to join but your annual dues are all that you have it doesn't cost you a thing to join but your annual dues are all that you have then in chapter 5 and i saw in verse 5 and i saw in the right hand of him that sat upon the throne rather verse one a book written within and on the back side 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 now john sees now the scene changes and he sees this one with this scroll sealed with seven seals and it is written we are told not only the front on the front but also on the back but sealed with seven seals now why seven seals because of the secrecy contained in the scrolls but also that in the scroll is contained as we will see a little later god's final disposition for the affairs of this world in other words that which concerns the future and the strong angel cries who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof and no man in heaven nor earth neither under the earth

was able to open the book or to look thereon no one was worthy and therefore john wept now worthy here seems to imply moral fitness moral fitness not that one

would not have the intellectual capacity to read but the moral fitness to be qualified to read because moral fitness is the true strength in the heavenly world the pure in heart shall see god those who are morally fit receive from god the knowledge of the will of god if any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine and so john wept why because he wanted to understand and no man was able to open the book and therefore to give understanding not one person in all the universe now there's a tremendous message here god will not give his message to a person who is not qualified to receive it god will not give his message to a person who is not qualified to receive it bunyan the tinker of bedford was qualified to receive god's message and this should be most encouraging to those of us

who are not in what is mistakenly called full-time service and for those of you who are studying the word of god i am sometimes asked why do you have high school students and college graduates together at the bible school where i teach well it's very simple a college degree does not qualify you for biblical revelation the word of god must be revealed by the spirit of god there must be the moral qualification a college degree can train you can be trained in your mind but you have to be prepared in your spirit and one of the very real dangers of our time is permitting the academic to displace the spiritual thinking that academic attainment qualifies us for spiritual revelation nothing could be further from the truth the only thing that qualifies a man for spiritual revelation is moral

fitness a holy life a life under the control of the spirit of god who alone can reveal to him the will of god and enlighten to him and illumine to him the word of god now let's underline that this is one of the problems of our time the academic displacing the spiritual and so you can have large brains and shrivel spirits god is a spirit no man was worthy the lamb is worthy he's morally fit he's qualified the perfect lamb of god to open that book now in verse five we come to one of the great scenes in all the revelation 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 loosen the seals thereof and i beheld in low in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb

as though it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of god here we find the lamb of god coming forward what a scene why because of his he is worthy he alone is worthy now why is he worthy because of who he is and because primarily of his victory over death because his of his victory over the powers of darkness because of his obedience to the father because of his spotless life he is worthy and because he is worthy he is able to know god's secrets and he is able to reveal god's secrets and he is also able to preside over things to come what a wonderful lord he is and he alone is worthy primarily because of his obedience to the will of god his father for his life he is worthy are you my friend in the place before your lord walking in holiness walking in

the light living for only one thing to know and do the will of god in order that you might know the word of god and the message of god for the people of god you see ultimately it's not what you know it's who you know why do we study the word of god that we might know the god of the word we don't study it that we might know doctrines but that we might know the god of the doctrine we must get past our studies to the god of whom it speaks so that you can have a great deal of biblical knowledge but very little knowledge of god his ways we're told he made known his ways unto mooses his acts to the children of israel they saw his acts they never knew his ways you can study this bible you can memorize it by the chapters or the books and never really know god there must be that qualification for

the illumination of the spirit of god it's not a matter of knowing it's a matter of understanding you recall in luke 24 then opened he their understanding that they might understand the truth you can know the truth but never understand it you can preach the truth but never preach it in the demonstration and power of the spirit of god so here we have the lamb in the midst of the throne coming forth and he is called by two great titles the lion of the tribe of judah and the root of david the lion speaks of the strength and the power of the great beast the emblem of an all-powerful messiah the root of david means that jesus christ is the son of david the messiah so he's the lion of the tribe of judah but i want you to notice that he is revealed as the lamb john is told of the lion the lion

of the tribe of judah he will open the seals and when he looks he sees a little lamb for the word is diminutive it's a little lamb when we think of a lion we think of his power and his majesty and his strength but here is a lamb now what does that speak of it speaks here of power manifest in seeming weakness power manifests in seeming weakness the lamb of god then the 4 and 20 elders fall down before the lamb now rather there are different words which given us here or a different word given us to describe the lamb of god it's a new word to give us a new conception of the lamb a new picture the lamb as it had been slain has seven horns and whenever we read of horns or a horn in the bible it always speaks of power and seven horns stands for perfect power or omnipotence then we

read he has seven eyes not only is he omnipotent he is um he is omniscient now these seven eyes stand for the all-seeing omniscience of the lamb of god and so we have this lamb of god coming forth with seven horns which speak of power and complete power but also seven eyes which reveals to us that the lamb of god has perfect knowledge and is present in every place omniscient omnipotent omnipresent so the total picture is the lamb brought before us as the lion of the tribe of judah the root of david the promised messiah the one who has all power and all knowledge in other words one who's all conquering power none can withstand and who's all seeing eye none can escape this is the picture we have here let me repeat this one who's all conquering power none can withstand and who's all seeing

eye none can escape then in verses 7 to 14 we have three great choruses of praise to this lamb the first and he came and took the scroll out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne and when he had taken the scroll the four living creatures and four and twenty elders fell down before the lamb having every one of them harps and golden files full of incense which are the prayers of saints now you will remember the four living creatures represent creation and the elders represent all believers and they are before the lamb who holds the secret of life's meaning in his hands the lamb is central the exalted christ the all-knowing all-powerful lamb and what is the response to this vision of the lamb of god well again it's worship it's worship why do people not worship god why do people

not worship the lamb they've never had a true vision of the lamb or a true concept of god to know him is to worship him first the prostration then we find the elders have harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints the harp of course was the great instrument in the old testament on which the praises of god were not only played but aided the one who played the harp to sing the praises of god and it's a very beautiful picture of the offering up of the prayers of saints as these four and twenty elders are prostrated before this tremendous revelation of the power and the might and the majesty and the glory of the lamb of god they sung a new song they are worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof for there was slain and has redeemed us to god by thy blood

out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation now this is the greatest song of praise the universe will ever hear i want you to notice that it finally reaches a tremendous crescendo it begins with the four

beasts and the 20 elders they are praising him because of his worth because he was slain because he was crucified and because of his submission to that crucifixion he has redeemed those praising him to god by his blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation the universality of it all every kindred every tongue every people every nation and has made us kings and priests and we shall reign on the earth but i want you to notice there is a rising chorus of praise in verse 11 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 now the numbers are not to be taken as literal a hundred million but it's an innumerable company of angels a vast company of angels now this is the second chorus and i want you to notice that the elders do not join in this chorus this is not a chorus for the believers you see 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 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 so the doxology is sevenfold perfect and then a final chorus and this chorus is the chorus of the universe every creature that is in heaven and

on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea and all that are in the sea and all that are in them heard i saying blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb forever and ever now here it is more than animate creation worshiping paul tells us in romans 8 the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now waiting for the adoption to wit the redemption of our bodies the whole creation and the hebrew mind delighted in speaking of every bird and every blade of grass mountains rivers praising god worshiping god so here we have the whole creation joining in this magnificent chorus and this reveals to us god's ultimate purpose in creation what is it that every created being might praise the one upon the throne

and the lamb on the throne with him this is god's purpose in creation now is that purpose being fulfilled in us are we numbered amongst those who know what it is to praise the one on the throne and to praise the lamb who is there on the throne with him it's the song of the redeemed then echoed by the angels and now merged into an utterance of all first the redeemed then the angels then all join in this mighty chorus it comes from all quarters and from all forms of creation the whole creation animate and inanimate praising worshiping but firstly it begins with that new song thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof and when i first began to worship jesus christ i made a little change here and there for thou hast redeemed me by thy blood tell him that thou art worthy o

lord to have dominion over me because you purchase me with your blood i am yours i am your possession how wonderful thou art in all thy ways how merciful in all thy works let's worship tell him that i've been saved now 40 years and the longer i live the more grateful i am to the lord for simply saving me for apprehending me and making me his own praise him every day of your life bow before that land and thank him that he shed his blood worship him because he laid down his life for you became sin for you worship him it's a new song but in the worshiping of him never forget that it's for all peoples all tribes all tongues all nations never forget it and when he reveals himself to you as the lamb of god the spirit of god is going to create with you new a passion that all might know him that

all might know him he's going to commit you to foreign missions yes he is when the lamb of god was first revealed to me i recall i was in the city of melbourne australia in a conference and i was making my way home when afternoon in a trolley car hanging on to a strap and as i made my way toward the home where i was staying the spirit of god spoke to me he said i want 50 of your gross income for foreign missions well

it must have been the spirit of god because i certainly have not been considering that and the devil wouldn't suggest it but i wanted to be sure 50 would be gross income uh that's a lot of money will you have enough left over to live on so i made my way to my bedroom knelt down before the lord and i stayed there a long time on my knees because if you make a commitment to your

lord you must keep it and i was absolutely certain that this was the voice of the spirit of god and that his commands are his enablings so there in that little bedroom i said yes lord that's all yes lord and from that time for many years until i was married 50 percent of the gross income was given to foreign missions and from that day to this money has never been a problem it's never been a problem there is such a thing as the law of recompense in scripture give and it shall be unto you pressed down shaken together running over but you must give first you lay down your little life and what do you get a life pressed down shaken together running over but you must give you throw away your rags that you might have his riches but you must give first you give of your substance you'll multiply

your substance you give of your life you have life more abundant it's the law of recompense very clearly revealed in the word of god and then there's a wonderful conclusion to all this praise of the lamb and the one who is on the throne verse 13 and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the sea and such as are in the sea and all that are in them heard i saying blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb forever and ever and the four beasts said amen and the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever the first two songs are in honor of the lamb but in this last the praise is addressed to the throned one and the lamb to both and this linking of both throughout the revelation is

common but here they are linked in praise equal worship and equal honor are given to both for they are one in deity and the four and twenty elders kept saying amen now what is the scene here after each of the seven inscriptions in verse 12 and the four in verse 13 so you have the 11 inscriptions and after each there is this great amen ringing out the inscription amen another inscription a pause amen another inscription a pause amen what a scene it's impossible to adequately take it in after each inscription a pause then the tremendous amen is heard revelation chapter 5 the great chapter of worship it was my privilege to serve in the australian army for six years during the war we had a long war began in september 1939 and during that time i met some very fine christians not many but some

outstanding young men of god but the most outstanding by far was a young man named tom walton i was present the night he was converted was in a hut in an army camp a training camp the chaplain had preached a very powerful gospel message made an appeal and i heard the thud thud of the hobnail boots of a young man coming to the front i looked up and here was a rosy-cheeked young fellow with big horn-rimmed glasses and i thought to myself as i saw him well i wonder if he'll really stand for the lord oh but he stood he was sent as a reinforcement to one of our oldest divisions that had fought in africa and now it was in new guinea so young tom was sent up as a reinforcement and the first time in action he received a high decoration for bravery he was a courageous boy and when he was killed

six weeks before the armistice those hardened veterans wept uncontrollably they loved this boy now why did i love why did they love him i went to his unit and i said to his officer i said could you let walton up for a few days they'd come out of action i'd like to spend a few days with him he's an old friend he said walton walton oh you mean christian he said i said well i don't know what you call him but he's tom walton he said yes well we call him christian why did they call him christian because they saw christ in him he was a great worshipper of jesus christ i read his diary after the war we published parts of it and in the diary sometimes

these words we attack at dawn i will be up at four to worship the lord consistently one morning he was absent from parade his name was called he

was the officer said to the sergeant where's walton he said well i don't know sir he said we'll try and find him so he finally went to his tent and here was tom on his knees worshipping the lord so he took him by the shoulder and he shook him and he said walton walton we're on parade get on parade what's the matter man so tom very quickly put on his accoutrement and made his way to the parade ground three or four days later the same thing happened again where's walton sergeant i don't know we'll go and find him so he went to his tent here was tom on his knees praying so the officer said if this happens again walton i'll have to parade you before the colonel and it did happen again and so this time he was taken up before the colonel and the colonel of course had decorated the boy and he

knew the boy so he said walton this is not like you what's wrong and tom in his beautiful sweet way said well colonel i begin to worship my lord jesus he used to call him his beautiful lord jesus he said and i can't hear anything i don't hear the bugle i don't hear the man i don't hear anything i'm sorry that's worship lostness in his god that's what it is and of course at 19 years of age god took him why shouldn't he take him he worshipped jesus christ it's not a matter of of knowing truth it's loving a person that's christianity do you know anything about that shall we pray dear father we know so much and yet it's possible we know very little we ask thee to teach us and make us teachable in jesus name amen

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