

THROUGH THE BIBLE REVELATION 4-5

“Cribs” is a TV show that takes its viewers on a tour of somebody’s crib. And for folks not as cool as I am... “crib” means “house.” “Yo crib” is where yo live, man.

There’s actually several different versions of *Cribs*. There’s an *MTV Cribs* for hipsters, and a *CMT Cribs* for country music fans, and a *Teen Cribs* for teenagers.

If you want to see Mariah Carey’s NY penthouse, or Carmelo Anthony’s country estate tune in to *Cribs*.

And if you want to see God’s Crib turn in the Bible to **Revelation 4**... For the Apostle John takes us on a tour of *the King’s Crib*. The curtain separating time from eternity is pulled back, and the door to Heaven opens.

John’s episode of *Cribs* begins in verse 1, “After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.” Here’s a few questions we should ask...

First, John is about to be shown “*things which must take place after this...*” What then, is the “*this*”?

Well, for the last two chapters in Revelation we’ve been discussing the Church. What John sees from here on apparently takes place after the church age.

And since *we are the church*, the plagues depicted in chapters 6-19, called “**Great Tribulation**,” are yet future!

Which leads to another question, *if all this happens after the Church age what happens to the Church?*

John is a member of the Church, and look at what happens to him - *Heaven's door opens... there's the sound of a trumpet... and John is invited to come up...*

This sounds like 1 Thessalonians 4. Jesus descends in the clouds and the Church is caught up to Heaven.

I believe Revelation 4:1 speaks of **“the rapture.”**

Note, in Revelation 2-3 the term **“church”** is used 19 times, but not once does it appear in chapters 6-19.

The NT teaches, that **before judgment comes down, the Church goes up.** Jesus snatches away His Church.

The Church is in Heaven when great tribulation rocks this wicked world. And John is included in the Church. From Heaven's press box John reports on the future.

First though, he describes his surroundings in chapters 4-5. He takes us on a tour of the King's crib.

John starts in verse 2, **“Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne...”** All this happened **“Immediately...”**

So often we think of the rapture as a slow ascent.

Our feet feel light - we have lift-off - we float through the clouds... That's not how it's described in the Bible.

1 Corinthians 15:52 tells us the rapture occurs **“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.”** That's immediate. A blink takes 1/50 of a second. A twinkle is even faster.

John was taken to Heaven *“Immediately”* - and when he opened his eyes he tells us what he saw... *“behold, a throne set in heaven, and One sat on the throne...”*

Imagine what John could've written about... Portals to the inner workings of the universe - vistas of unseen heavenly bodies in deep space - bizarre angelic creatures - detailed blueprints of the mansions we'll inhabit - *streets of gold, saints of old, mysteries untold!*

But that's not the feature that grabs his attention...

John's eyes are fixated on a centerpiece. Everything in Heaven revolves around a throne and its Occupant. As vast, and beautiful, and magnificent as Heaven must be it's dominated by a single throne and its Ruler.

Listen to John's description, *“And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance...”*

Jasper sparkles like a diamond. Sardius is ruby red. Vivid colors are bursting out of the throne of God.

“And there was a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald.” A rainbow provides the whole spectrum of color. Here it's framed in emerald green. On Earth we're treated to half rainbows, but in heaven a circular rainbow surrounds God's throne.

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones (miniature thrones), and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes...” And notice on top... *“they had crowns of gold on their heads.”*

John was not the only person in the Bible to be given a glimpse of God's crib. Ezekiel and Isaiah received a similar vision of Heaven. But here's what none of the OT visionaries saw... *these twenty-four elders*.

Ephesians 3 tells us that the Church was a mystery, hidden from the OT prophets. This is why in the OT visions of Heaven the *elders* were absent. *I believe these elders represent the Church*. Here they're clothed in white robes – *the righteousness of Christ*.

In Matthew 19 Jesus promised His disciples that they would sit on twelve thrones. He promises all faithful believers that one of our rewards is to rule with Jesus.

I hope God rotates His elders in Heaven like we do at CC. Maybe after a 100-billion years I'll get a turn.

Again, they wear *“crowns of gold on their heads.”*

This is the Greek word *“stephanos”* - not the *kingly crown*, but *victor's crown*. It's a wreath placed on the head of an Olympic champion - the one who prevailed.

And these crowns are **rewards** that Jesus passes out to His faithful servants. The NT mentions various crowns. It's an incentive for us to serve. We can win a crown! And it's vital we do... *as we'll see a little later...*

Verse 5, *“And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices.”* Notice, God's throne is not a peaceful, pastoral retreat. It's a charged atmosphere.

Color radiates... Energy pulsates... It's as if the throne is plugged into an electrical outlet that's sending it high voltage current. Lightning cracks, and thunder rolls, and voices of all sorts shout from God's throne.

God's throne in Heaven is like Sinai on steroids. In the OT God's manifestation shook the mountain. Here, the glory of God shakes the foundations of Heaven.

Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. (or the seven-fold ministry of the Holy Spirit.) **Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal.**" A huge sea sat motionless.

Imagine the acoustics as the lightning, and thunder, and voices reverberate off the reflective water.

This was a sensory experience unrivaled by anything John had experienced on Earth. Even today all the pyrotechnics in the world couldn't reproduce the scene.

Here's a color and light show complete with surround sound. God's throne is like an overheated reactor. It boils, and glows, and rumbles, and sparks, and growls.

Where did people ever get the notion that Heaven is boring and drab - it's a labyrinth of sterile white hospital corridors, or a bank of puffy, fluffy cumulus clouds?

Nothing could be further from the truth!

When I imagine Heaven, I think of Jesus' promise to the thief on the cross. Jesus said, **"Today, you will be with Me in Paradise."** The Persian term, **"Paradise,"** referred to a walled garden in the midst of the desert.

Rich sheiks would build a wall around their oasis.

Outside the walls was nothing but sand. But within the garden was lush vegetation, delicious fruit trees, shady palms, underground aquifers, springs turned into fountains, please arbors where people sat and relaxed.

When Jesus talked about Heaven He referred to it as an oasis in the midst of the desert - a beautiful garden.

This Earth is a gorgeous place. And God created it in six days... Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told His disciples He was going to prepare a place for them.

He's now been working on Heaven for 2000 years.

Imagine, if Jesus made this Earth's beauty in less than a week, after 2000 years heaven will be heavenly!

God's crib boggles the brain. Heaven explodes with the color, light, and sound of a big budget rock show.

Trust me, Heaven will blow away the stereotypes.

And John doesn't just describe the **appearance** of God's throne - He's also impressed with the **activity** going on around that throne! There's perpetual motion.

Heaven is eye-popping, and feet-hopping! Heaven is a happening place. No one stands idly by. No one has his hands in his pockets, or is twiddling his thumbs. No one in Heaven is bored, or confused about what to do.

All heaven is consumed with one activity...

John reports in verse 6, “And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, **were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back.**” Here’s a creature with its head of a swivel. It never dozes off - it never takes a nap. It’s eyes are always on the target.

It’s interesting to me, that what has been all but forgotten by the vast majority of people on Earth - *the throne of God* - is all these creatures care to gaze at.

Not once do they tune-in Fox News - or catch the scores on ESPN - or see how their stocks did - or check their Facebook or Twitter - or even browse Pinterest. They’re solely mesmerized by God’s glory.

At the time of this vision John was still an earthling.

His feet were still planted on terra-firma. John still has earthly interests. But when he saw into Heaven all that he look at and talk about was God and His throne.

And when he returned from heaven to Patmos I can promise you he never saw life the same way again.

This world is a jungle, but it isn’t as appealing, or foreboding once you see Jesus as King of the Jungle!

The creatures John sees not only have eyes in the front and back, but they have faces... “**The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle.**”

These four faces represent attributes of God... Here’s a 4 x 4 advertisement for the glory of God...

God is like **a lion** - His power and majesty... He's like **a calf** - His service and sacrifice... He's like **a man** - His creativity and intellect... He's like **an eagle** - His wings glide through the heavens and He is sovereign over all.

It's interestingly, the Gospels also paint this picture. Matthew depicts Jesus as **the Lion of Judah**, the king... Mark, **the suffering servant**... Luke, **the perfect man**... And John, **the Son of God**, sovereign over all...

Verse 8 continues, **"The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within."**

In the Bible there're two types of angels - **cherubim and seraphim**. Both are warrior-types. There're fearsome. Men see them and melt like wax. In the OT a single angel killed 186,000 soldiers in one night.

Ezekiel saw **cherubim** with four faces like in verse 7.

Isaiah saw **seraphim** with six wings like in verse 8.

Apparently, John sees a hybrid - a **cheru-phim** or a **sera-bim**. The living creatures are special-ops angels that guard God's throne... Heaven's Secret Service.

And notice their movement - their vigilance - they never stop - they're always on duty... Verse 8, **"And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"**

These angels praise God for His holiness. Three times they shout **"holy"** in deference to the Triune God.

And they acknowledge His timelessness. God dwells outside the time domain. He is the God of the past. *History* is His Story... He's the God of the present - the Great I am... He's the God of the future. The world is spiraling headlong to a climax that serves His purpose.

He “*was and is and is to come*” all at the same time.

Heaven is full of activity - and John notes that it's not all spontaneous - rather it's a synchronized response.

Heaven is all abuzz, but its *an orderly buzz*... John describes what happens in verse 9, “*Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever...*”

That's the cue... And at that very moment, “*The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever...*”

This whole chapter has been leading up to verse 10, for “*The priority of Heaven is the worship of God.*”

And notice the worship - it isn't passive. The elders *fall on their faces* and *lift up their voices*. Sadly, I've been to churches that were more like a morgue.

Think of an old, tired hound dog. He rarely budes. He's back and forth between comatose and dead.

In contrast, have you ever seen a energetic puppy? There's enthusiasm, expectation, awe, and joy. Dog gone it, when we worship we should act like puppies!

Worship is not a time of the week - or a place to meet - or a program the church follows. Worship is a verb! It's something we do. It's our response to God!

Understand what worship looks like in Heaven...

These colossal, battle-hardened angelic creatures - who if you met in a dark alley would strike fear in your heart - are jettisoning back and forth, hovering like a Blackhawk helicopter over the throne. They never rest.

Distinguished elders - heroes of the faith - fall on their faces, cast down their crowns, and cry out God's greatness. **Worship is Heaven's most serious business!**

Notice specifically, the elders **"cast their crowns before the throne..."** 1 Corinthians 3 tells us all believers will appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

There our works will be tried and motives screened.

Did we serve the Lord to promote ourselves? Was pride or selfishness involved, or did we do it for Jesus?

And crowns will be rewarded to us accordingly...

Now, I've heard Christians say, *"When I'm in heaven I'll just be glad I'm there. I'm not worried about a reward."* And that, is a very short-sighted perspective!

Worship is the reason I work and serve the Lord. I'm trying to rack up as many rewards as possible because I don't want to get caught with nothing to give Jesus.

For all of a sudden you're going to see the King... the nail prints in His hands... the scars on His brow..

And you'll be instantly overwhelmed with what He's done for you. It'll reduce you to tears. You'll be lying there before Him, nothing but a pile of melted gratitude.

Then, out of the corner of your eye, you'll see them. The elders will be casting their crowns at Jesus' feet.

You think, "*Yea, that's what I'll do. I'll show Him my gratitude and love. I'll give him my crowns.*" But what if you have no crowns? What a frustrating feeling to finally be in the position to give back to Jesus a little of the love He's given you... and you're empty-handed.

I can't imagine a more humiliating moment.

Verse 11 tells us, the elders "*cast their crowns before the throne, saying: "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created."* I love the OKJ version, "*Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.*" *Here's why you and I were created?* To please God. For His pleasure.

And until you accept why you're here, how will ever determine which way you should go? "*God is calling us back to that for which He created us - to worship Him.*"

The elders in heaven tell us we were created for God's pleasure – *and we need to listen to our elders!*

You've seen the slogan, "*I Play, therefore I Am.*" The idea is that *life is all about leisure, fun, good times.* But the motto is a letter off. It should read, "*I Pray, therefore I Am.*" The reason you exist is to fellowship with God - to bring Him pleasure, and bring honor to His name.

Think of a fish on the dock. It's strained. It's drying. It's dying. But quickly drop it in the lake. Suddenly, it comes to life. *Why?* Fish were made for water not land.

And so it is with us. Apart from God we're like a fish out of water. But get us in fellowship with Him and we come to life. *We were created for God and worship!*

A big part of the American dream is home ownership.

Everyone wants to own a house. In fact, here's a list I found entitled, "*Reasons To Own Your Home...* 1) A home is a durable investment. 2) It offers significant tax benefits. 3) It allows you to accumulate equity."

Now let me give you three reasons why you an apartment is a good idea... "1) Stuff breaks and if you own it you fix it. 2) Grass grows and it has to be mow. 3) *And one word I can't even bring myself to say. It causes me nightmares. I'll have to spell it... P-A-I-N-T.*"

In reality the notion of actually owning your own piece of property is a myth. It flies in the face of Revelation 5. Here Jesus lays claim to *all* the Earth.

This is the land acquisition that super-cedes all other real estate deals. I can say I own *my* parcel, but Jesus holds the deed to planet Earth. We're just squatters!

Revelation 5 revolves around **seven S's...** a **Scroll**, a **Sob**, a **Sibling**, seven **Seals**, some **Scars**, the **Supplications** of the saints, and a new **Song**... Pay attention, here is one of the Bible's great chapters!

First, John sees a **scroll**. Verse 1, "**And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.**"

The only other biblical reference to a sealed scroll is in Jeremiah 32. It's **a title deed to a parcel of land.**

Ancient deeds were written on double-sided scrolls or **opisthographs**. Written on the outside was a legal description of the property and its owner. The inside contained covenants and terms required to take possession. Often scrolls were lengthy, and bound at intervals with waxed seals. *This* scroll had seven seals.

When a property changed hands, and the price was paid, the seals were broken. The parcel belonged to a new owner, but the breaking of the seals disclosed the steps he had to follow to take possession of the land.

The scope of interest in *this* deed indicates it's a very strategic document. Its appearance in heaven tips us off that a very significant real estate transaction is about to take place. *A deed is about to change hands!*

Verse 2, "Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it."

We see a *scroll* - and now John **sobs** because no one is worthy to enforce the deed! Obviously, this real estate venture is an agonizing experience for John...

Every real estate deal I've ever engaged in has been an ordeal. You shop listings, inspect the property, negotiate a price, apply for financing - then there's the survey and title search - and a mound of paperwork.

Buying a house is exhausting and stressful. It can bring you to tears! Like John, it can cause you to sob!

Yet John's sobbing is a bit different than ours! It's not the process that causes John to weep - *it's what's at stake!* You cannot overestimate the value of this parcel.

I believe, like many Bible students, that the scroll in Revelation 5:1 is actually the title deed to the universe.

Realize, God is into real estate. He gave land to Abraham - subdivided plots to Jacob's 12 sons - set aside a tract for David's heir to build the Temple. God enacted laws governing the transference of real estate.

From centuries before Christ until [Century 21](#) (that's today) - God the Realtor has dabbled in real estate, *in anticipation of the final deal that occurs in Revelation 5.*

Yet John is sobbing because he sees no one worthy to open the scroll, and take possession of the universe.

When God created the heavens and earth the crown of His creation was mankind - *made in His image.*

God put Adam and Eve in a garden to till and cultivate it, and eat its fruit. Because He loved the man and woman He gave them dominion - supremacy and control - over the entire Earth. In naming the animals man expressed his authority over the animal kingdom.

You can't imagine the beauty of life in the garden! Work was no sweat. All Adam and Eve had to do was pick fruit off a tree. They inherited a perfect utopia.

We're so use to disappointment, and pain, and injustice, and illness, and corruption we can't imagine what life was like before sin entered into our world...

But we ruined paradise! Adam listened to the snake, and rebelled against God. And instantly life changed.

Everything under man's dominion began to buck against his authority. The creation became subjected to randomness. Mother Nature went nuts. Hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, and tsunamis now plague us.

And ever since, Satan has had a field day. Since man is blind to God and the things of God, Satan preys on our ignorance. We're easily snookered, deceived.

Satan has wrestled the world from man's control.

Today, it's obvious Satan has at least semi-control of the world we live in. Jesus acknowledged this in John 12:31 when He called Satan "the ruler of this world."

Satan is a usurper. When mankind divorced himself from God, Satan stole control of the neighborhood.

In Matthew 4 Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world. All Jesus had to do was worship him. Of course, Jesus rejected the devil's diabolical deal, but He never questioned the his right to make the offer.

Jesus knew this world is in Satan's clutches.

This explains the awful shape our world is in today.

Our fallen condition is not God's fault. If you've blamed God for the cancer, or crime, or injustice, or child abuse, or senseless accidents, or war, or famine, or birth defects, or Alzheimer's - you owe God an apology. The world today is not as God created it to be.

It was gifted to man - but then stolen by Satan.

The miserable conditions we live in are the result of *man's dominion* and *Satan's influence* - not the *governance of God*. This world was given over to man, then forfeited to Satan... as a result John sobs. I like the paraphrase, verse 4, **"I wept and wept and wept."**

Remember it was a strong angel who offered the challenge, **"Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"** Immediately the situation looks grim.

This is a strong angel - maybe an archangel - but he can't open the scroll... If *strong angels are out - then who's left?* A human would certainly be a step down... not even a Moses or David are as strong as angels.

Verse 3 makes it official, **"No one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it."** They can't find anyone worthy enough to even give it a gaze. No wonder John cries like a baby!

It reminds me of the newlyweds who went shopping for their first house. They didn't have much money.

They told the realtor their salary, then they asked, **"Do you think you have a house in our price range?"**

The agent answered, “Yes, its current owner is a German Shepherd named “Prince.” And this is why John sobs profusely – *all mankind is in the doghouse!*

Which brings us to the third “S” – the **sibling**.

God knew man would foolishly throw away his dominion, so early in the annals of Israel, He enacted laws that governed the ownership and transfer of real estate - even adding a provision for *redemption*.

Every property transaction in Israel came with a clause. The original owner retained the right to buy back the land if he could afford the redemption price.

In ancient Israel, families lost their land in two ways.

Either the owner died without an heir - or the land was used as collateral for a loan that couldn't be paid.

If the owner was unable - or even dead - a sibling could step in and redeem the land for his family. This relative was called a “Goel” or “**sibling redeemer**.”

John knew the Laws of Redemption... That's why he scans heaven for a *rich relative*, but he finds no one worthy. He fears this *fallen world* will stay stuck in its *fallen state*. That's when an elders next to God's throne walks over to John, and tells him, “*Cheer up, Johnny.*”

And John never forgot the good news he delivered, verse 5, “**But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”** There is One who has prevailed!

There's a Lion from the tribe of Judah who *matched the requirements* and who *satisfied the terms of the redemption*. He is the One who can *bankroll the scroll!*

Revelation 5:5 is one of the most strategic moments in history. The opportunity to take back this fallen world is about to expire - *when suddenly, One emerges who can right all wrongs and redeem all that's been lost.*

He's the "**Lion of Judah**" - the "**Root of David.**"

The ancestral tree of Israel's kings had the family of David as its branch, and the tribe of Judah as its trunk.

Jesus was born a man - both of the *right tribe* and *right family* - of *Judah* and of *David*. This gave Jesus the perfect pedigree to be mankind's *sibling-redeemer*.

Jesus is *our rich relative* - *rich in righteousness*.

Through *His perfect life* and *His sacrificial death* He earned enough equity in righteousness to pay the debt our sin had caused. Put it all together and *Jesus* has the credentials to pop the scroll and loose the seals.

And understand His motivation, Jesus endured the brutalities of the cross - not just because He wanted to buy a chunk of land. I'm sure He own plenty of planets.

A parable in Matthew 13 reveals His real incentive.

Jesus said, "**The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**" The man buys the land - not to possess another field - but for the treasure hidden in that field.

And we are that treasure! Jesus loves us. He buys back the Earth to make us members of His family.

Which brings us to the fourth “S” - what about those seven **seals**? Jesus doesn't just open the scroll - He breaks the *seals*. Little wax seals bound up the deed.

It was one thing to buy back a piece of land - but it is quite another issue to force the person living on it to vacate the premises. Thus, the breaking of these seven seals reveal another step toward a final eviction.

I heard of a homeless man who pitched a tent in the front yard of the public library and refused to move. When negotiations failed, *he was taken away by force*.

But what if you were in route to the library when you saw police manhandling this hostile, homeless fellow.

You might cry, “**police brutality**.” *Unless you knew the story*. And this what you need to realize about Satan. He's a squatter - an interloper who refuses to move.

This is why chapter 5 is so crucial to what happens in the rest of the Revelation. Jesus is going to rough-up this rebel planet. He'll evict Satan, his demons, and the legions of humans who joined in their coup d'etat.

Each time Jesus pops a seal in Heaven sparks fly on planet Earth. Terrible judgments are unleashed.

But don't forget Revelation 5! Jesus holds the title.

This world rightly belongs to Jesus. And He will eliminate everyone who stands in the way of His rule.

For centuries now a stubborn Satan has been *having his way*... a rebellious man has been *getting his way*...

We live in an age that might be call “*the day of man.*”

But coming soon is a time the Bible refers to as “*the day of the Lord.*” Revelation 6-19 describe a period of time when God will have His say in the affairs of man.

Satan will get escorted off the premises.

In verse 5 the elder refers to the *sibling*, our Redeemer, as “*The Lion of the tribe of Judah.*”

The lion is considered *the king of beasts*. Go to the zoo and watch a lion swagger as he walks. The other animals shutter in fear when they hear him roar.

Examine his jaws, his teeth, the sweep of his paws.

A lion is a picture of courage, power, dominance, agility, ferociousness... *and a perfect type of Jesus!*

There’s an excerpt from CS Lewis where Lucy talks to Mr. and Mrs. Beaver. Lucy asks, “*Who is Aslan?*”

Mr. Beaver is astonished, “*Why, don’t you know? He’s the King, He’s the Lord of the whole wood.*”

Lucy replies, “*Is He safe? I’ll feel quite nervous about meeting a lion.*” Mrs. Beaver jumps in, “*That you will, dearie, anyone who appears before Aslan without their knees knocking is either braver than most, or just silly.*”

Again, Lucy asks, *“But is He safe?”* That’s when Mr. Beaver utters, *“Safe? Who said anything about safe? Of course, He isn’t safe, but He’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”* Revelation proves Jesus isn’t a tame lion.

Jesus will one day bring the wicked to their knees.

He’ll clean up the mess we’ve made. The Righteous Judge will bring to order a universe in contempt.

Notice another “S” - it’s a surprise. Jesus takes the *scroll*, and ends the *sob*, and is the *sibling*, and breaks the *seals*... but whatever you do don’t miss the **scars**.

The elder calls Jesus a lion, but when John turns his head, we’re told in verse 6, *“And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, 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 sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”*

“Horns” are a symbol of strength. *“Seven eyes”* speak of His omnipresence. He’s empowered with the seven-fold anointing of the one Holy Spirit. He’s King.

But surprise!... The Lion looks like a Lamb. The word translated *“Lamb”* is *“little lamb.”* *“Mary had a little lamb”* and He’s now the conqueror - *the roaring Lamb.*

Lambs or sheep are the most talked about animals in all the Bible - but usually in connection with sacrifice. A river of blood flowed from the Temple. The only way Israel could come before God was with a sacrifice.

And all those sacrifices were leading up to the ultimate, perfect sacrifice. As John said of Jesus, “**The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**”

Now it's at a critical moment in the universe's history that the Son of God steps forward to take the title deed to God's creation and to open the seals of judgment.

Heaven and its angels have always known Him as the Lion. But here Jesus appears as a sacrificed Lamb.

If I asked you, “**What are the only man-made things in heaven?**” You should answer. “**the scars of Jesus.**”

After the resurrection, Jesus showed the scars in His hands - a hole in His side - wounds in His brow. Even His face was disfigured as they plucked out His beard.

And if the wounds in his hands were visible, why not His other scars? When Mary first saw the risen Lord she didn't recognize Him - mistook Him as a gardener.

It's probable Jesus' face bore marks of His scarring.

Isaiah 52:14 prophecies of Jesus, “**His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.**” Hebrew scholars Kiel and Delitzsch translate that verse, “**So disfigured, His appearance was not human, and His form not like that of the children of men.**” He was beaten beyond recognition...

I believe when our Lord Jesus was taken off the cross His face looked like it belonged to a boxer who'd just gone 15 rounds in a slugfest. His body was torn and tethered as if in a devastating airplane crash. If there'd been a funeral it would've been *closed-casket!*

Thus, when John sees Jesus, *he's expecting the Lion*, yet “(there) stood a Lamb as though it had been slain...” Here is a lion that looks like a butchered lamb.

I think at first we'll be shocked. We might even recoil in terror when we see His scars. I'm not sure anything can prepare us for our first look into the face of Jesus.

But it won't take long for us to recall that His scars represent the price He paid so we could be redeemed and made part of God's family. Suddenly, those scars will become *a source of pride and a catalyst for praise!*

I believe when a million years expire in heaven - we'll keep going back to those scars, and there we'll learn the depths of our Savior's marvelous love for us.

The scars will always be there as eternal reminders of the price Jesus paid, *but the Lion will suffer no more.*

His face speaks of love, but there's fire in His eyes.

Hands that cradled babies, and opened blind eyes, break open seven seals that wreak havoc on the earth.

In this one moment, John's faith matures. He realizes judgment will flow from the same spigot where mercy now streams. In Heaven today, God's throne is the “*mercyseat*” - but soon it will be the *judgment seat*.

We need to learn to see Jesus not just as He once was on Earth, but as He is now and forever. He's more than a sacrifice. The Lamb is also King of the Jungle.

Before this vision I imagine John was a lot like us...

He quibbled over illnesses and life's injustices. How could a *good God* allow *bad stuff*? His faith was fragile.

But after this vision John stops his quibbling, and wondering, and doubting... He knows that soon - very soon - righteousness will prevail. Our fractured world will be reset. Evil will be punished and faith rewarded.

From now on John hangs, not only his hopes for his own soul, but for the whole world, on the roaring Lamb.

And John joins the heavenly host in verse 8, “**Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.**” Here's another “S...” the **supplications** - or *requests* - of the saints.

Realize your prayers do matter. At times it's hard for us to see this truth from our vantage point on earth. But here we get a glimpse of heaven - God's throne - and guess what's there? **A bowl full of our prayers.**

Don't say the prayers you hoist up to God get lost in the shuffle, or don't really matter, or get ignored. To the contrary, God puts angels and elders in charge of your prayers. They're kept in close proximity to His throne.

Later God will address this bowl of prayers.

Eventually every cry for justice, and deliverance, and blessing, and peace - even retribution is answered by God - but in His way and in His time - not our own.

And notice our final “S” - a **song!** It’s true, “**In the end every prayer will become a praise.**” It may take 10 days or 10 years, or 10 million years, but it will happen.

Verse 9 tells us, “**And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."**

Who is this in heaven singing? Who but the church can sing such a song? Who fits the description - “***redeemed out of every tribe, tongue, people, nation.***”

This is certainly not Israel. Only the blood-bought Church of Jesus can sing this song of redemption.

This means that while the seals are broken - *when the gloves come off, and God pummels the Earth with judgment* - the Church is in heaven singing His praise.

Verses 11-12 provides us lyrics to Heaven’s song...

John writes, “**Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands...**” In other words, too many angels to count.

“**Saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!"**

Heaven is amazed most not by the Lion’s claws, or paws, or teeth, or roar... *but those scars.* For time eternal whenever we see His scars we’ll bow and worship. The Lion is hailed, “**the Lamb who was slain.**”

And worship never dies down in Heaven. About the time one voice fades another eruption of praise occurs.

“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...” Now all creation joins with Heaven in the worship and adoration of the Lamb...

“I heard (them) saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.”

Here's what I think, I think it's time for us to stop *our* quibbling. Yes, we live in a fallen world. Yes, life isn't always fair. Yes, life can throw some nasty curveballs.

Injustices occur. Accidents happen. Disasters strike.

Life doesn't always turn out the way we'd hoped.

But a grown up faith realizes it's only temporary. A Lamb roars from Heaven. He's worthy to rule. He has a deed in hand, and He's about to settle every score.

Stop *wondering* and *worrying*, and start *worshipping*!

John's few moments in heaven taught him to remember those scars, certainly! *But don't stop there...*

Don't just see Jesus as He once was, but as He will be. John learned to hang all his hopes - for a better life *and* a better world - on Jesus, the Roaring Lamb!