

10

Worship

Revelation 4-5

What is God's ultimate purpose for men and women? To worship him! But to truly worship God we must see who he is and realize what he has done. In Revelation 4-5 we enter with the apostle John into the heavenly realms where we observe the response of those who truly see the Lord.

John is writing to believers around A.D. 90-95 during the reign of the emperor Domitian, a time of tremendous persecution. They were living in a world where evil was rampant and apparently all-powerful. However, John's focus on God in all his glory would have been an apt reminder that evil is not in control. God's purpose stands; *he* controls the world's destiny. The worship pictured in these chapters reorients our thinking too, giving us a vision of God's character and rule in the world.

1. What images come to mind when you think of worship?

2. Read Rev. 4, imagining all that John experienced in his glimpse into heaven. Describe what he saw, heard and felt.

3. What is the first and primary sight which meets his eyes (Rev. 4:2-3)?

What is the significance of this?

4. What do we learn about God's character from John's description in this chapter?

5. What response does this evoke from the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders (Rev. 4:6-11) ?

6. Read Rev. 5. What characters are involved in Rev. 5:1-7, and what is the nature of their activity?

7. Jesus is described both as the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5) and as "a lamb, looking as if it had been slain" (Rev. 5:6). What do these names tell us about who Jesus is?

8. In Rev. 5:9-10, what do we learn about the results of Christ's death?

9. Reread Rev. 5:8-14, identifying the different beings worshiping the Lamb. What different forms of worship do you see?

10. What does this variety suggest about our attitude toward forms of worship which are very different from what we are accustomed to?

11. Considering Rev. 4 and 5, how would you define worship?

12. Compare your worship with that of Rev. 4 and 5. What are the similarities and differences?

Why do you think this is so?

13. Considering God's character as seen in Rev. 4 and 5, spend some time now worshiping him in brief expressions of praise and thanksgiving.