

Palm Sunday Sermon—Revelation 5—The Lion is the Lamb

I. Context: the Setting

- a. John the Apostle brought before throne of God
- b. Key verse: Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah; but with a twist

II. Vv.1-4

- a. Scrolls—Roman Emperor would send scrolls as executive order, brought about the enactment of his will; wax seal which only the right person could open
- b. No one comes forward who is worthy to open God's scroll.
 - i. No human or angelic creature can offer salvation from the judgment of sin (we cannot fix this dilemma, nor elect someone who can fix what is wrong with humanity).
 - ii. John recognizes this truth and weeps; there is a time to mourn for the fallenness of humanity *and* our own sin and broken world

III. Vv. 5-7

- a. One of the elders—24 Elders represent God's people in both OT and NT
- b. Weep no more—we need not despair
- c. Lion of tribe of Judah (*Gen. 49:9-10*)—blessing over Judah; 1 of 12 tribes; Jesus from Judah's line; lion portrays strength and courage
- d. Jesus a worthy king; able to open the scrolls; but there is a twist:
- e. When John looks for conquering king, he sees a slain lamb
 - i. Consider Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: riding a donkey; 5 days later he would be slain on a cross; Lion of Judah gave himself to be a Passover lamb
 - ii. People wanted a king who would conquer for them, but Jesus is a different kind of king
 - iii. A slain lamb conjured images of the Passover when the lamb became the substitute to redeem and save the firstborn sons (*Exod. 12; c.f. Lev. 22:20-21*)
- f. The Lion of Judah would give himself over as the Passover lamb to be slain

IV. Vv.8-10—They sang a new song

- a. Jesus was worthy because he was faithful unto death; by his blood he ransomed for himself people from every tribe, tongue and nation; salvation began with the Jews, but would spread throughout the earth (Jesus is a savior for all)
- b. They praised because he had made them into a sacred people (kingdom and priests); our *ultimate identity* is in our global kinship with Christ-followers; not our own race, country, political party, special interest groups, etc.

V. So what?

- a. In what ways are we looking for salvation? In what ways are we using our power?
- b. Are we viewing salvation and power the way the world does?
- c. In what ways does our following a *Palm Sunday King* go against what is happening in the polarized world (and our own nation) today?

- d. Palm Sunday worship is an anticipation of what's to come; but it comes through a road of suffering (rejoicing can be superficial); Rev. 5 worship is based on final victory for the one who came through with Jesus; may we celebrate Jesus in the right way for the right reasons.