

## INDUCTIVE STUDY IN THE BOOK OF REVELATION - PART FIVE

In chapter 4, the scene in John's story returned to heaven where he began in chapter 1. In between, chapters 2 and 3, he had examined the generally sad condition of seven churches on earth.

Remember how each of the seven letters began with some part of the vision of Christ in chapter 1 which in itself had been drawn from all over the Old Testament. They were reminded of Jesus as they already knew Him. Similarly each message concluded with a promise about a new discovery they would make about Him if they repented and trusted Him again. The new discoveries come from chapters 4-22. Every time we prove Christ we are ready to make a new discovery about what He waits to be in our lives today. The rest of the book, chapters 4-22, expands on the exciting hints dropped at the end of each letter. A simple way to look at chapters 4 onwards is to see it as alternating between glimpses of the glory of heaven as it already is, contrasted with the horror of earth, as for many it is even now. Knowing the first equips us to face the second.

Chapter 4 describes an open door to heaven. God wants to open a door in our imaginations as to how it is in eternity, even though conditions on earth may be a glimpse of hell. The key ideas are:-

- God is still in charge. (the throne)
- He is wise, beautiful and faithful. (the precious stones and the rainbow)
- Those He chooses to lead on earth share His authority, His righteousness and His success. (our thrones, white garments and crowns)
- God demands to be seen and heard in heaven and through the witness of His church on earth. (the trumpets, the thunder and lightning, the lamps and the spirits)
- When He is in charge there is a miraculous calm which allows us to walk on the waves of life circumstances. (the sea of glass like crystal)
- His way of making Himself known is through the four views of Jesus given to us in the gospels, as king, servant, man and the son of God. (the four living creatures)
- The gospels point us to Jesus who can be everywhere, see everything, never changes and will return. (the wings and the eyes, and the message they speak)
- When good things happen the credit belongs only to Him. (the Bible acknowledges Him, the Old and New Testament leaders acknowledge Him, and so they cast their crowns before Him)

5:1-14 Q.1 In the last chapter, Jesus was presented to us as king and creator. How is He pictured in this chapter? How does this new view of Him contrast with the previous one? Why is this a necessary balance?

5:1 Q.2 What is the Lord holding in His hand? What is its message? Why is it sealed? Is it the Bible? Could it be the book of life?(Rev.3:5) Is it the same book described in chapter 10? What about the book mentioned in Isa.8:16; 29:11; Dan.9:24; 12:4,9?

5:2 Q.3 Where else do we meet 'the strong angel'?(Rev.10:1; 18:21) Why do you think he is described as strong? What special tasks does he have? What might be the function of the seals on the book? For what purpose were seals used in Bible times?(Matt.27:66; Jn.3:33; 6:27; Rom.15:28; I Cor.9:2; II Cor.1:22; Eph.1:13; 4:30; II Tim.2:19)

5:3,4 Q.4 Who would normally be allowed to open a sealed letter? Who would therefore be worthy? Why was no-one worthy to open this letter? What makes a Christian leader like John sad?(Acts 20:31) What makes God sad?(Eph.4:30)

5:5 Q.5 In what Old Testament pictures is Jesus described here? Where do they come from?(Gen.49:9; Isa.11:1,10) What ideas do these picture convey? How were these things necessary to make it possible for Jesus to open the seals?

5:6 Q.6 In what third Old Testament way is Jesus now presented?(Jn.1:29; Isa.53:7) Why might He be linked together at this point with the 24 elders and the four living creatures? What special characteristics is He described as having? What are horns and eyes all about in the Bible?(Dan.8:3; Zech.3:9; 4:10) Is it not contradictory for Jesus to be both Lion and Lamb? Why are the seven Spirits of God also referred to as seven eyes?

5:7 Q.7 How can God in this verse be both on the throne and standing as a Lamb at the same time?

5:8-14 Q.8 What are the three groups who sing God's praises in this section? Whom do they represent as far as we are concerned? Why do you think they sing much the same hymn of praise one after another?

5:8-10 Q.9 What according to this first song makes Jesus worthy? For whom did He die? What does this tell us about our unfinished task in the world? How does this glimpse of heaven give us courage when the task seems too difficult or the opposition too great?

5:11-12 Q.10 Who now joins the choir for the second song? What is the significance of their presence? Remember the meaning of the word 'angel'. Again what was the reason for praising Him this time?

5:13-14 Q.11 Who else is added for the last song? Where would we fit in? What encouragement is there here for suffering Christians? Are we alone when we face trouble? 'Amen' means 'so be it' or simply 'I agree!' With whom do we have to agree to have our thoughts lifted to heaven when earthly circumstances are tough?