

The Song of Revelation

Text: Revelation 19.4–7

Theme: Seeing God's glorious justice & mercy strengthens us to live worshipfully persevering lives by faith in Christ Jesus.

Introduction – Songs can be quite powerful

- they can evoke memories and sentiments to make us laugh or cry
- they can motivate us out of doldrums
- they can soothe and bring a sense of peace
- songs can be quite powerful

Books of Scripture have their own songs

- and they do just what songs do
- they evoke trust, conviction, security and peace
- they can motivate, condemn, warn, and challenge

Revelation has it's own song

- we need to learn to sing it and sing it often
- we will learn it's main melody, it's sweet harmonies, it's eery notes in minor keys
- but we will learn to sing it
- we'll sing of God's glorious justice and steadfast mercy which strengthens us to live worshipful lives as we persevere by faith in Christ Jesus
- so, let's look at the stanzas of this song together

The first musical notes we hear are to...

I. Hear & Obey

- we see right away that this is one of the first pieces of this book
- if you want God's favor upon you, then read it out loud, hear it, and keep it
- this promised of blessing for hearing this prophecy comes at beginning & end
- 1.3 and 22.7

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

"And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

- when Scripture makes an *inclusio* like this, we should pay attention to it
- and not just the beginning and the ending; but all that is in between the beginning & ending
- in other words: hear and obey this revelation of Jesus Christ
- keep what He is telling us
- and what is He telling us?
- to see God's glorious justice & steadfast mercy which strengthens us to live worshipfully persevering lives by faith in Jesus Christ

So, let's see God's...

II. Glorious Justice

- John is given to see a great deal in this vision
- some, is what is taking place here on earth
- and what he is given to see is, well, to say the least, not good
- sin runs rampant, sometimes even within Christ's churches
- evil, at times, appears to have no harness or leash upon it
- the wicked act like they are sovereign, ruling all things

- but then, we must also, as we saw last week, see things from heaven's perspective
- we must observe, with John, what is going on in God's throne room
- there are great scenes of worship there, but flowing from those come God's judgments
- seals are broken open, trumpets are sounded forth, and bowls are poured out

From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

For three and a half days some from the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb, And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake.

(Revelation 4:5; 8:5; 11:9; 16:18 ESV)

- these judgments come from God Himself & they are inescapable
- we, who are God's people, need to pray that God will use this
- that He will use the revelation of His wrath to bulldoze the wickedness that is wooing us

- God's justice is perfect, even as He is perfect
- He is holy and all deserve to be consumed by it
- but God does spare some, we'll see this throughout this book
- *And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,*

(Revelation 5:9 ESV)

- *It is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. These have been redeemed from mankind as firstfruits for God and the Lamb,*

(Revelation 14:4 ESV)

- Christ Jesus has borne God's wrath and justice in His body upon a cruel cross
- and for all who look to Him for salvation, God's wrath will never be an issue; kept from it

But even as we speak of God's justice and wrath, we also see His...

III. Steadfast Mercy

- someone mentioned to me as they read through Revelation it seemed like a lot of judgment
- so, is Revelation just about judgments to come?
- in part, yes; but no in the whole
- for those who know Christ now, you have known mercy, not judgment
- is it possible for others to join the ranks of those described in 7.3?
- *those who have been sealed on their foreheads for God?*
- yes, indeed it is: the gospel of Jesus Christ is held out nearly through the entire book

- but we must understand that sometimes God's mercy is shown in His harsh warnings
- *The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk,*

(Revelation 9:20 ESV)

- *They were scorched by the fierce heat, and they cursed the name of God who had power over these plagues. They did not repent and give him glory.*

(Revelation 16:9 ESV)

- **and cursed the God of heaven for their pain and sores. They did not repent of their deeds.** (Revelation 16:11 ESV)
- **And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe.** (Revelation 16:21 ESV)
- mercy was in the warnings and yet they refuse to heed it, take it, and repent of their sin
- mercy is folded into His judgments
- God's judgment is actually His kindness in disguise
- outpouring of His wrath is meant to condemn everything else that you trust instead of God
- this is expressed by Paul in Romans 2
- **Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.** (Romans 2:4–5 ESV)
- His mercy is there in warnings so we might be lead to repentance and salvation
- God judges so He can save us
- His mercy is seen in the almost unceasing way He puts the gospel before us
- **Then I saw another angel flying directly overhead, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who dwell on earth, to every nation and tribe and language and people. And he said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come, and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."** (Revelation 14:6–7 ESV)
- so, hear and obey the words of this book: see God's mercy & coming judgment & repent now

Those who have repented, known His mercy and salvation are led to...

IV. Worshipful Living

- Christ is exalted throughout this entire book
- even when evil and wickedness seem to have an upper hand, Jesus is still on His throne
- this is why we must look with a heavenly perspective, not an earthly one
- too easy to see the dramatic rise of inflation & cost of products all around us
- simple temptation to fall into by merely looking at gender dysphoria and give up
- not hard to fall prey to continual haranguing about priorities of skin color
- when you're retirement or other investments languishing in tumbling market economy
- well, if you have eyes set here on earth, you despair, grow cynical, and doubtful
- but are we not told to do something vastly different, even by Paul?
- **If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.** (Colossians 3:1–2 ESV)
- or what about writer of Hebrews exhortation?
- **let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith** (Hebrews 12:1–2 ESV)
- if we would but keep our eyes seeing things from heaven's perspective, well so much different
- then we'd find worship of the One True God governing all things

- we'd sing the song with the heavenly anthem:

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

(Revelation 4:8, 11; 5:9–10, 12–14 ESV)

- this leads us to persevere, to endure
- this is part of the command of Christ to us that we are to hear and obey
- patient endurance is called for seven times throughout this revelation of Jesus
- worship fuels our perseverance & endurance leads us to worship Him who saved us

And so, ultimately, in this apocalyptic prophecy, we see...

V. Jesus Christ Revealed

- in late 1980s, a series of books were published asking us "Where's Waldo?"
- you remember these visual puzzle books, right?
- amidst colorful, jam-packed scenes that caused eye-strain and headaches...
- ...you were to find Waldo: goofy guy with red-and-white-striped shirt & stocking cap
- bespectacled with black-rimmed glasses, you had to pick him out of all this chaos
- many never did or never would: too hard, too confusing, didn't care for them
- but if you stuck with it, you would find Waldo
- and once you did, you could always find him again quite easily
- Revelation is like this with us, isn't it
- you either avoid it because it gives you a headache
- and in the avoidance, you miss seeing Jesus Christ ultimately victorious & glorified
- oh, you claim that you know this, but you have never seen Him in pages of this book
- but once you have seen Him, you always see Him
- easy to see Him standing amidst lamp stands of the churches
- still not so hard as the Lion who looked like Lamb slain
- but when Dragon and Beast and second Beast, along with whore of Babylon seem to win
- when such horrific things happen on earth, especially to believers...
- ...this is when it is hard to see Jesus
- but see Him you must and see Him you will
- *Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.*

(Revelation 1:7 ESV)

- and do we not long for that day to see Him as seen by John in 19:11–13?

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

(Revelation 19:11–13 ESV)

Conclusion – Oh, that we would all lend our voices to sing the song of Revelation

- singing this song is the natural response to God's absolute sovereignty
- how can we not sing of Christ's wonderful atoning sacrifice?
- even as we get glimpses into heaven, our hearts are elevated into the very presence of God
- no longer is our sight held by earth and the stuff of the world
- no, we're captured, enraptured, enthralled and entranced by seeing Christ
- there He is: risen, ascended, reigning, coming soon, victorious, glorious, wondrous
- pray diligently during these coming Sundays that we would learn this song
- learn this song of the One who has promised to hold us fast