

“SONGS OF HEAVEN – 2.) A NEW SONG”

Revelation 5:8-14

There is an infectious quality about singing. If a group of people are at someone's house, at a community center, or at church and someone goes to the piano and starts playing and singing a song, pretty soon others will come over and join in. When that song is over, someone will suggest a similar song. If the first song was a hymn, then the group will probably continue singing hymns. In a veterans' group they might be singing patriotic songs. People old enough to remember World War II might sing "Praise the Lord, And Pass The Ammunition", "Rosie the Riveter", and "Right In The Fuehrer's Face", and Kate Smith's "God Bless America." Or someone might start singing songs from childhood-

"Oh, playmate, come out and play with me
And bring your dollies three,
Climb up my apple tree,
Look down my rain barrel,
Slide down my cellar door
And we'll be jolly friends forever more."

Songs trigger our memory and emotions. When we hear a song or start singing it, we remember the times and the people we sang that song with when it was new to us.

When I was a very little boy my Grandmother would hold me in her lap and sing, "Beautiful dreamer, wake unto me, Starlight and dewdrops are waiting for thee; Sounds of the rude world heard in the day, Lull'd by the moonlight have all pass'd away!" She would sing that song by Stephen Foster until I was asleep.

In our text today, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders sing a new song to the Lamb, then others join in with refrains.

1.) And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, . . . (Revelation 5:9a NKJV)

John saw a door standing open in heaven and an angel invites him, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this." There in heaven John sees the throne of God and the One who sat on the throne. Around the throne of God were twenty-four thrones and the twenty-four elders seated upon them. From the throne proceeds lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Before the throne seven lamps were burning which were the seven Spirits of God. Around the throne of God were the four living creatures. We considered their song last week. The twenty-four elders respond to their song with their own song, "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."

John then sees in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. A mighty angel with a loud voice proclaims, "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. (Revelation 5:2b,3 NKJV)

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. (Revelation 5:6-7)

What is this scroll? John has been promised "...I will show you things which must take place after this." This is the Scroll of History – not just a time line of coming historical events, but a prophetic sacred history. Christ's death on the cross is the fulcrum of history. The scroll is the timeline of what God has ordained to restore to their original goodness the creation and creatures that He made in the beginning.

2.) 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, (Revelation 5:9 NKJV)

The twenty-four elders had previously sung that God is worthy to receive glory and honor and power because He created all things and it is by His will that they continue to exist. Joined by the four living creatures they now sing that the Lamb is worthy is take the scroll and open its seals because He was slain. As the seals are opened on this scroll, there is revealed to the Lamb who was slain, the steps by which the redemption He purchased with His blood will take place.

Redemption is a word associated with indebtedness. In the Old Testament, if a person lost their land through indebtedness, it could be redeemed, bought back, and then the land would be restored to its original owner. Before I met Lorraine, I was engaged to another girl. Her father took the engagement ring and pawned it. Her brother found out about it, got the pawn ticket, and redeemed the ring;he got it back.

Every sin puts us in debt to God. "There is none righteous, no not one" "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." That is why we pray, "Forgive us our debts." Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins by His blood. He redeemed not just His people, the Jews, but all whom God chose before the foundation of the world from every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

"Blessing and honor and glory and power,
Wisdom and riches and strength evermore
Give ye to Him who our battle hath won,
Whose are the Kindom, the crown, and the throne.

Soundeth the heaven of the heavens with His name;
Ringeth the earth with His glory and fame;
Ocean and mountain, stream, forest, and flower
Echo His praises and tell of His power"

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

3.) And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."
(Revelation 5:10 NKJV)

Immediately following the Last Supper, the disciples were quarreling over which of them should be considered the greatest. Toward the end of settling that dispute Jesus said,

"For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:27-30 NKJV)

Paul rebuked the Corinthian Christians for taking disputes among themselves to civil judges when they are destined to judge the world:

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

(1 Corinthians 6:1-3 NKJV)

Peter reminds us that Christ has made us royal priests, a holy nation:

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:9 NKJV)

Christ has made us not only kings but priests who pray for all people:

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. (1 Timothy 2:1-2 NKJV)

Then millions of voices in heaven sang this refrain to the new song:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:12 NKJV)

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, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

(Revelation 5:13 NKJV)

Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. (Revelation 5:14 NKJV)

