

Revelation 5  
From Oz to AWE

Dennis Johnson – From Oz to Awe

We all know the story line of The Wizard of Oz. If not, too bad. It's been out since 1939.

The story of Dorothy is a parable of American Life. She is taken by a tornado from her black and white farm in Kansas to a colorful world of Oz. Dorothy wants to go home and is set on a path to see the Wizard for help. Along the way she meets the scarecrow, Tin Man, and Cowardly Lion. They join her hoping that the Wizard can help them get brains, a heart, and courage. When they finally fulfill the demands of the wizard and get an audience with him, Toto pulls back the veil revealing an old man operating buttons and levers that create sound and smoke, speaking into a microphone, and looking like the medicine show huckster back in Kansas. He is the Wizard of Oz.

The wizard's terrifying splendor is merely the product of technology and savvy marketing, so he could not deliver the gifts sought by the pilgrims. Then again, he does not need to bestow these gifts, for along the path of their pilgrimage the tin man has revealed his compassion and the scarecrow his ability to think, and even the lion has proved tremulously brave. In other words, through their quest to reach the wizard's court they have already saved themselves, so all that the wizard needs to do is to certify their accomplishments. This is the perfect parable for self-reliant American individualism. It also exhibits a light-hearted cynicism that suspects that nothing in the universe is worth our wonder.

**People who can fix themselves are not easily impressed by anyone who presents himself as bigger or better than they are.**

**Is anyone or anything intrinsically worthy of awe?**

Johnson continues...

The loss of awe in the modern world could be attributed to the expansion of scientific understanding, the democratic impulse in world politics, or our growing technological capacity to simulate the miraculous on film, television, and computer screens, where we can create a virtual world in which anything can happen, but nothing actually happens.

**The Book of Revelation wages war on the reductionism that chokes awe.**

**John's vision of the One sitting on the throne and of the Lamb is permeated with their supreme worthiness and therefore by the awe of all who see them.** (Rev. 4:11; 5:9-10, 12; cf. 4:8; 5:13) Dennis Johnson

John sees the scroll, and hears the question... "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" No one was found so John began to weep greatly until he hears the GOOD NEWS "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

**RESPONSIVE CONGREGATIONAL READING (WITH GUSTO)**

6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they \*sang a new song, saying,

**CONGREGATION:**

"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

**PASTOR:**

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

**CONGREGATION:**

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

"To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

**ALL:**

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

This morning we'll take the last part of this chapter v. 6-14

v. 6-10 The slain Lamb INSPIRES AWE and praise from the four living creatures and the 24 elders.

v. 11-12 the angels join in the praise

v. 13 EVERY CREATED THING joins in

v.14 the four living creatures form the AMEN corner and the elder fall down and worship.

This scene in Chapter 5 sets up the rest of what unfolds in the book. The opening of the scrolls is the "unveiling", i.e. the apocalypse OR Revelation.

**v. 6b-10 The slain Lamb INSPIRES AWE and praise from the four living creatures and the 24 elders.**

In the symbolism of the Bible's apocalyptic literature, horns represent powerful kings or nations (Dan. 7:24; Zech. 1:18-21). The Lamb's seven horns show his supreme worthiness to receive the praises that greet his appearance (Rev. 5:9, 12, 13), but they primarily portray his supreme power. The Lamb's seven eyes show his omniscience as well as the mode of his presence with his embattled churches, for these eyes, like the seven lamps before God's throne, symbolize "the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth" (Rev. 5:6). Johnson

**The heavenly audience responds with praise and worship.** There are expressions of awe, verbal and physical as they proclaim and bow down.

v. 8 bowls of incense – prayers of the saints...???

<https://www.faithtacoma.org/revelation/2008-11-09-am>

Johnson commentary p.97

These incense prayers will play a key role as they are referred to in chap 6 and 8. As an answer to the martyrs' appeal for justice and the suffering saints' laments, God will send fiery vengeance on earth, sea, rivers, and sky.

**THE WORSHIP IS EXPANSIVE** From v.8 to the end it intensifies in three concentric circles that expand the number of worshippers involved. (24 Elders.....Angels.....All created beings)

v. 9 – they sing a NEW SONG

The saving exploits of God call forth new songs – Ex 15; Isa 42, Ps 96

In the OT the saving work of the Exodus is recounted in song and now the saving work of the Exodus of Christ is proclaimed in song.

**Luke 9:30 -31 30 And behold, two men were talking with Him; and they were Moses and Elijah, 31 who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His departure (exodus) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.**

In the OT exodus there were a few non-Israelites who came out with Israel, but in Revelation we see that Jesus saves from every nation, tongue, and tribe.

**The worship is IMMEDIATE**

**They don't wait for the seals to be broken.**

The Lamb came and took the scroll and now the scroll can be opened, and the voices are heard in praise:

**“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

**10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”**

They worship based on the Past exploits of salvation.

The “worthiness” of Christ is beginning of three doxologies in chapters 4-5 4:11, 5:9, 12. In the doxologies of chapters 4-5 we see a focus on the Eternal nature of God, His excellencies, and His worthiness:

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and is and is to come**

**Worthy are you to receive glory, honor, and power...for you created**

**Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing 5:12**

**To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be blessing, honor, glory, dominion, forever and ever.**

Praise and honor are attributed to God, who sits on the throne, AND TO Christ the Lamb i.e. Jesus is divine.

**V. 11-12 THE ANGELS JOIN IN THE PRAISE**

**11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,**

**“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”**

A myriad = 10K. These numbers boggle the mind. The point is not to do the math and count the angels, but to be overwhelmed and notice the content of their song – “Worthy” is the lamb who was slain. The key event of all history.

Everything we hope for – acceptance, forgiveness, and eternal life are based upon the bloody, effective, purposeful, sacrificial work of Christ.

**Through His death, Jesus purposefully and effectually purchased for God a people for His own possession.**

We are made for God and His purpose and His glory. God does not exist for our purpose and glory.

**v. 13 EVERY CREATED THING joins in the cosmic crescendo of praise**

**13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,**

**“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”**

**THE WORSHIP IS FROM THE WHOLE PERSON**

Nothing is held back; it is rational, emotional, and physical

Praise to the Holy God who is from eternity past, expands to embrace the eternal future of praise forever and ever.

## V.14 THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES FORM THE AMEN CORNER

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

### IMPLICATIONS??

**This vision is meant to comfort those who are suffering.**

**Unveiling God's plan puts steel in the soul and the spine of those who suffer – CJ. Mahaney**

In your suffering, be assured that the Lion Lamb identifies with you, and He is in control.

This vision assures the victory of Christ over all that is painful and perplexing when we suffer. The One who opens the scroll suffered for you and me.

**It is meant to provoke and convict those who have become complacent or lukewarm – ch 2-3**

They are to treasure Christ above all. The Lion Lamb is the one who knocks at the door – 3:20. He is the one who desires to fellowship with us.

**This vision is an invitation to join the heavenly celebration.**

By God's grace, our names appear on the invitation as well. We are to give Him the praise and adoration that He deserves. We are to join in corporate celebration and worship in private celebration.

### HOW TO RENEW A SENSE OF AWE?

**Keep our eyes on Christ. He ALONE is worthy of awe.**

No other biblical character deserves such esteem. No character of church history deserves such esteem.

Cultivate your walk with Christ- personally and corporately. Don't try it alone. There is no such thing as a Lone Ranger Christian. Even the Lone Ranger had Tonto.

**Our relationship with God is personal, but it's NOT STRICTLY PRIVATE.** We are a part of the body of Christ. It's a FAMILY AFFAIR, and as the church family we want to help you through a network of shepherding relationships.

One of those relationships will be a Lay Shepherding facilitator. Think of him or her as an "AWE BUDDY".

It won't be a perfect system because we are not perfect people. But an imperfect system is better than no system at all.

The Session has asked a number of men and women to assume a role as "Lay Shepherds" and they have agreed to serve you in this way.

If you are an adult member or regular attender (over a period of time), then someone has taken you to be in his or her group. The groups are gender based and they are only on paper, i.e. they don't meet per se. Each Lay Shepherd will have 3-5 people and you probably won't know who the other people are in the "group." You don't need to.

This is what the Lay Shepherd is committed to:

**The basic responsibilities can be remembered with this word: PACE –**

**Pray for you - regularly**

**Availability –** let you know that he/she is the first one you should go to in a time of shepherding need.

If you avoid your Lay Shepherd, then YOU are taking a step away from the first line of the care giving ministry of Highlands.

**Contact –** maintain a minimum of a MONTHLY contact with you– phone, a personal conversation during the month. Keep an eye out for the folks in their group on Sundays. If you're absent for more than 2

weeks in a row, they'll will be notified so that they can touch base with you. Don't be offended at that. If you know you'll be out some, you might want to let him/her know ahead of time.

**Example** – set an example of faith, love, repentance, worship, service, and support of the work and worship of this local body of Christ.

**Some mutual guidelines:**

You need to be open and available to speak with your Lay Shepherd, and share to the degree that you feel comfortable.

**Expect confidentiality.** The only exception would something of a serious nature that may need additional care or input.

**Here's what you can expect:**

- Within the next week to ten days someone will contact you via phone, in person, text, email, or realm to let you know that they have volunteered to be your "Lay Shepherd".
- If you are a member, this is a basic part of what the membership vow means to participate in the work and worship of the church.

Church membership is a two-way street. There are mutual responsibilities.

If you are not yet a member you can participate if you like, or you can simply say, "No thank you."

Why announce this TODAY in Revelation 5?

- We need to begin this initiative
- Remember v.8

**8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.**

We want to fill up some golden bowls full of incense – THE BOWL SEASON ISN'T OVER.

Here are some of the names of recent Bowl games – all true

Tailgreeter Cure Bowl

RoofClaim.com Boca Raton Bowl

Radiance Technologies Independence Bowl

Famous Idaho Potato Bowl

Cheez-It Bowl

Duke's Mayo Bowl

**The Bowl Season never ends in heaven which has THE GOLDEN BOWLS OF INCENSE**

Those bowls are filled with the prayers of the saints.

**We are more inclined to pray the more we are connected to Christ, and we are more inclined to be connected to Christ the more we are connected to one another.**

So, when your Lay Shepherd contacts you don't think of it as an intrusion into your "private life". Embrace it for what it is – a vital part of your spiritual life within the Body of Christ.

Together, let's add to the Golden Bowls of incense around the throne of God.

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