

Session 4: The Throne and the Lamb

What We Found

Through the open door of Revelation 4:1 John was shown heaven's throne room, and we went with him and found worship: the four living creatures, drawing on Ezekiel 1 and Isaiah 6, singing the thrice-holy hymn; twenty-four vested elders casting their crowns; incense; and the sealing Amen. Heaven's worship is structured, communal, embodied, and unceasing. Then the pivot of the whole book: no one is worthy to open God's scroll until an elder announces the Lion of Judah, and John looks and sees a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain. He hears Lion; he sees Lamb. The Lamb's conquest is cross-shaped, and his followers conquer through faithful witness in union with him. The new song tells what the blood accomplished: a people ransomed from every tribe and tongue and nation, made a kingdom and priests. And the elders hold golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints: your prayers do not evaporate; they are present before the throne.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons · *Against Heresies* (summary)

St. Irenaeus taught, in substance, that the four living creatures around the throne correspond to the fourfold Gospel: lion, ox, man, and eagle picture the one Christ proclaimed by four evangelists, gathered here into unceasing praise.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine · *City of God*, Book 22 (summary)

St. Augustine describes, in substance, the life of the world to come as one unending Sabbath of praise: we shall rest and see, see and love, love and praise; this is what shall be in the end without end. John was shown that praise already sounding.

VOICE OF THE CHURCH

St. Irenaeus of Lyons · *Against Heresies*, Book 3

St. Irenaeus links the four living creatures with the fourfold Gospel: one Gospel in four forms, held together by one Spirit. St. Irenaeus is the early witness to the link; the now-familiar emblem assignments settled later.

Live It This Week

- Each morning this week, pray Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come (Revelation 4:8) aloud as your first words of the day.
- Once this week, bring one specific worry to prayer and picture Revelation 5:8: your prayer in a golden bowl, presented before the throne.
- Memorize the memory verse.

Memory Verse

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing! (Revelation 5:12, RSV2CE)

Before Next Session

Read Revelation 6.

Catechism references from this session: CCC 956; 1090; 1137–1139.