

**Revelation 5: 8-10; "And they sang a New Song", Sermon # 39 in the series -
"The Faithful and True Witness", Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on
November 12th, 2006, in the Afternoon Worship Service.**

The Lord Jesus Christ, in John's vision has just taken the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits on the throne. He has been found worthy to open the scroll because He had prevailed by His faultless, righteous life, and sacrificial death. In chapter 4 we saw that the Father, the Lord God Almighty, is holy. He is worthy of all of our worship because He has created all things, and by His will they exist. Here in chapter 5 we find the Son of God is worthy of worship as well because He has redeemed the Elect unto God. He is the only one who is worthy to open the book of God's decrees of what will happen to the Church in this age, because He has laid down His life, so that we could have eternal life. He accomplishes redemption at the cross and then gives us life based upon the grace that He has purchased. This is the New Creation, those who have been redeemed, those who have been purchased by the sacrifice of the lamb. Christ having accomplished the great work of redemption, has received a Mediatorial kingdom from the Father. This was purposed in eternity past, prophesied of in the book of Daniel in chapters 2 and 7, as we saw last week, it is now prophetically announced by John in relation to its future progress among the nations. Christ has come and taken the scroll from the hand of the Father. And now being ready to open up the history of redemption, He receives praises and prayers from all the saints that He has redeemed. These are offered up, not only for what Christ has accomplished in His death, but also for what He will do in every generation, for and through His Church, in anticipation of His saints coming to reign upon the earth even as they presently reign in heaven with Him now. They are described in our text as "singing a new song." We will ask the question this afternoon, "What makes the song that the Church sings here, a New Song?" It is new because the Church realizes what Christ has given her to be, and to do, and to become by His grace. We will only look at what Christ would have us to be and do and leave what we will become until next Sunday.

1st- He would have us, as His saints, to be those who are always praising Him and laying up prayers with Him. (Verse 8)

"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." The Lord Christ has finished the work of redemption and is now to apply it to His people by giving them life and power to witness to what He has done. He is going to build His church and she is going to be a militant church, waging spiritual warfare as we shall see in chapter 6. But the way that His kingdom will advance and the victories that the Church shall obtain for her King will not be by using force and carnal weapons. She will advance by praise and prayer first of all.

She will advance through praise; that is the meaning of the symbol of the harps here in verse 8. "The twenty four elders and four living creatures each have a harp in their hands. This is the picture of praise. I am thinking of an Old testament type of what we are speaking of here. It is found in 2 Chronicles 20 where we find King Jehoshaphat and Judah were about to be attacked by a great army of the Moabites and Ammonites. What the king and these people did is a good example of how Christ's kingdom advances during the Church age. They prayed and then they praised God for

the victory that He, and only He, would surely bring. The enemies of the people of God are described for us here as "a great multitude" in verse 2. In verse 12 king Jehoshaphat prays and says, "O our God, will You not judge them?" "For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." He confesses their inability to deal with their enemies or even how they should proceed to come against them. "Now all Judah," it says in verse 13, "stood before the Lord." This is corporate prayer, and the power of it, when not only the leaders of the church but also the little ones, the wives, and the children are participating, looking for the answer that the Lord will give. "Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, in the midst of the assembly." "And he said, 'Listen all you of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you King Jehoshaphat!' "Thus says the Lord to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.' "Tomorrow go down against them." "You will not need to fight in this battle." "Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you!" "Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you." "And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord worshiping the Lord." "Then," it says in verse 19, "the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high." "So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out Jehoshaphat stood and said, 'Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.' "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and saying, 'Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.' "Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who come against Judah; and they were defeated." "For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them." "And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another."

This is the very way that the kingdom of God advances in the New Testament times as well. I do not mean with the physical death of our enemies, but we look to God and to Christ in prayer for everything we cannot face, everything that is too great for us, and for help against all those who would threaten to undo us as Christians. Our enemies would attempt to nullify the good Word of God as being true. They would suppress the truth of it and the reality of Christ in being the only Savior of sinners, the only Lord to rule over us. They would attempt to call evil good and good evil, and even common decency and morality and kindness are trampled in the dust. But we as Christians must become a people of praise in relation to all that God has done for us in giving us Christ to be our Savior. This is how we face them; this is how we meet them. We praise Christ Himself as the One who has defeated all of our spiritual enemies on the cross, and who will also give us the wisdom and the ability to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. He will help us when no one else can and when no one else will. We are now living in a day when it is easy to become discouraged by what is happening to our nation. It appears that Truth has fallen in the streets. This past week saw the worst defeat at the polls, for conservative values, that has been seen for many years. Now the House of Representatives and the Senate have Democratic majorities, and who knows what will

be the result now, in the suppression of what is true and right? The Church may be led into a "Babylonian captivity" of great proportions. What are we to do? In Psalm 137 it says, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." "We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it." "For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!' "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" But you see, because of Jesus Christ, we have a New Song; a song that cannot be drowned out, a song that can be sung in all circumstances. Why? Because "we know that whatever befalls us, Jesus doeth all things well." We fall down before the Lamb, both ministers and saints, each having a harp. We still have much reason to praise. Psalm 34 says, "I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth." I think of Paul and Barnabas singing praises to God after they were beaten and thrown into prison. They were singing praises and the prisoners were listening.

But 2ndly-if we look at the text again we see that it is the prayer that comes after the praises.

The prayers are offered up by the Living Creatures and the Elders in golden bowls as incense. Why is this? It is because our prayers are not always answered immediately as those of Jehoshaphat and Judah were. It is because we don't always see the victories of souls saved, and truth established, and errors destroyed, being won by the church in facing her adversaries, that we would like to see. We just read of a great deliverance in 2 Chronicles chapter 20. But what we will see in the book of Revelation, in the unfolding of the things that will happen to the Church during the time of her warfare, is trial and tribulation and distress at a number of points. But "we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." And so prayers for the strength to endure, for the strength to bear witness, for the strength to honor God are going to be frequently seen in this book. These are the prayers that are stored up with God. They are a sweet fragrance in His nostrils. They are of great value to Him, precious as gold. They are prayers that are described here as "golden bowls of incense." This is imagery taken from the instructions given to Aaron and his sons who were to burn incense perpetually before the Lord. In Exodus 30 it says in verse 1, "You shall make an altar to burn incense on..." And verse 7, "Aaron shall burn on it sweet incense every morning; when he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it." "And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations." Aaron was the high priest in the Old Testament; Christ is our High Priest in the New. All prayers come to God through Him. Christ is also represented by the altar on which the incense is burned. Let me read you John Gill's thoughts on this. In his commentary on chapter 30 of Exodus, in the introduction he says this. "This altar was a type of Christ, the shittim-wood may respect his human nature; which wood, though it sprung out of the earth, was not common, but choice and excellent, and very strong, durable and incorruptible; and so Christ, though he was man made of an earthly woman in his human nature, yet was chosen out of the people, he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and excellent as the cedars, the man of God's right hand, whom he made strong for himself; and though he died in it, he saw no corruption, he now lives, and will live for evermore; in which nature he acts the part of a Mediator, and intercedes for his people, and offers up their prayers, perfumed with the much incense of his mediation, which this altar has a special respect." This is indeed the picture given to us here in the book of Revelation. This is

part of the New Song. Our prayers are offered up every day, in fact, at all times as it says in Ephesians 6: 18, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with perseverance and supplication for all the saints--and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." My brethren, we are in a spiritual battle, and we can only see the Church, and even this church, make progress in righteousness and truth by praising God for what Christ has done, and by praying through Him for the strength to win these battles. Psalm 141 says, "Lord, I cry out to you; make haste to me!" "Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You." "Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." This is what the Lord is calling us to, my beloved brethren. If we do not see this, we are fools indeed. Make room for this New Song in your hearts. What are you praying for in these days? I hope it is for advance of Christ's kingdom in this place and in the world. These advances of His kingdom will come when you and I become a more thankful, praising people; a people who will sing the New Song of what Christ has done, and what He will do for those who will fill the golden bowl of incense with their prayers. The New Song is a song proclaiming the triumphs of Jesus Christ. And it is a song proclaiming His triumphs, not only for us, but what we expect will take place in us and through us as His Church, to His glory, in all the earth. This the way His blessed kingdom will come, first in our hearts and then unto the nations. But we believe that because salvation is of the Lord, that it shall be so. May the Lord give us this spirit of grace and supplication to pray in this way.