

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

OCT 21ST, 2018 // BOOK OF REVELATION

Revelation 5 is a prelude to the final judgment. Christ is portrayed in splendor as a slaughtered Lamb- the only one worthy of opening the Scroll of God's judgment on earth.

THE SCROLL (5:1-5)

Revelation 4 began the 2nd vision John received.

- Chapter 4 was the scene of the everlasting worship of God in His throne room.
- Now the scene shifts as a new element involving time and history enters the scene.
- John himself now becomes a participant in the dialog of heaven rather than just an observer.

John notices that God now has a scroll in His right hand.

- The scroll had writing on both sides and was sealed with "seven seals".
- To seal a letter or scroll with wax on the outside edge was customary in ancient times.
- This would've guarded the privacy of the contents until an authorized person broke the seal and opened the scroll.

Seven is the number of perfection, completion, and God- so for the scroll to be sealed with "seven" seals most likely meant that God Himself had completely and totally shut the contents of the scroll.

- The scroll is not titled, so scholars have debated about exactly what it represents.
- Most likely it is simply the scroll containing the plan of God's judgment.

Within the scroll is God's plan to condemn wickedness and reward righteousness in the final act of human history.

- If God was the one who made the plan, then not just anyone is worthy to enact the plan.
- John records an angel asking in a loud voice if anyone was worthy to open the scroll.
- But no created being was worthy to unleash these judgments of God.

So John begins to weep loudly.

- This isn't so much because he was disappointed at the thought of not being allowed to see the contents of the scroll.
- Most likely, John understands the scroll to be the decree of God's judgment against evil and he was weeping because it appeared to be postponed indefinitely.

As John is weeping, one of the elders commands him to stop crying because someone has been found that's worthy.

- John hears two unique titles for the worthy one- the "Lion of the tribe of Judah", and "the Root of David".
- These two phrases are allusions to Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah.

The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" alludes to one of the 1st messianic prophecies in Gen. 49:9-10 that points to the messiah coming from the tribe of Judah.

- The "Root of David" is an allusion to Isa. 11:1, where it is prophesied that the messianic king will come from the bloodline of David.
- Jesus was both from the tribe of Judah and an offspring of David- He's the Messiah!

THE LAMB (5:6-8)

Although John heard about a lion, what he saw instead was a Lamb.

- The Lamb was standing, very much alive, although it had been slain.
- Only God would inspire John to write that the conquering, powerful victor of the universe appeared as a Lamb.
- The Lamb was in the "middle" of the throne room- that is, the focal point.

The metaphor of a lamb was well-known by the prophecy of the suffering servant in Isa. 53.

- Many didn't know what to do with this prophecy.
- John sees the Lamb appearing as if it'd been slaughtered for sacrifice, but standing alive.
- This points primarily not to the humility or meekness of Christ, but His sacrificial death.
- It shows that He has been sacrificed on our behalf, and yet He lives forever.

The Lamb had seven horns- in the O.T. horns often symbolized power, so seven horns suggests the fullness of divine power.

- The Lamb had seven eyes, "which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth"- this symbolizes the doctrinal truth that the Holy Spirit proceeds from God the Father and God the Son.

The Lamb came to the One seated on the throne and took the scroll without objection and delay.

- This demonstrates the Lamb's worthiness and ability to unleash all of the judgments contained in the scroll.
- It is Jesus that perfectly carries out what the Father has determined, reminding us as readers of the opening words, "the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave Him." (1:1)

When the Lamb took the scroll, the four living creatures and twenty-four elders fell down

- In their hands, they had "harps", a hand-held stringed instrument much like a guitar.
- The purpose of the harps was to accompany the song they're about to sing.
- Musical worship is a big deal in heaven- so we should get used to it here on earth.

The elders and living creatures also held "golden bowls full of incense", like the saucer-like bowls in which incense was offered to God in the tabernacle (Ex. 30:7).

- The contents of the bowls is identified as, "the prayers of the saints" (5:8).
- The point is that when God's people on earth praise and pray to Christ, their worship and prayer is received in heaven!

A NEW SONG (5:9-14)

John now hears the elders singing a new song, one with a different focus than their original song (Rev. 4:11).

- The 1st line of the song answers the question of vs. 2- "who is worthy?"
- Jesus (the Lamb) is worthy because of His willing sacrifice ("you were slain") and the result of that sacrifice ("with you blood you purchased people for God").

The verb "purchased" was the normal word used for the business transaction of buying.

- This is describing the effect of Jesus' sacrifice- His blood was given to the point of death as the price of admission into the kingdom of God (v. 10).
- A similar verb is sometimes used in the O.T. that is translated as "redeemed"- as when slaves were purchased and set free.

How far-reaching was the purchase of the Lamb?

- Persons of "every tribe and language and people and nation" (vs. 9) were included.
- His redemptive work was not just for Jews (or even Americans), but included people from all ethnicities and societies from around the world!
- The result of purchasing representatives from all the earth's peoples is that "they will be a kingdom and priests to serve our God" (v. 10)

God had told Israel in the days of Moses that He would make them a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation". (Exod. 19:6)

- Now John sees this transformation and fulfillment of what God had told Israel.
- But this also includes a future dimension- the Lamb's people one day will reign on the earth with their King (This is fully described in Rev. 21-22)

Now John's perspective pulls back so that he looked and saw something new- a multitude of angels so big it was described as an incalculable number.

- The number for 10,000 was the largest that the Greek language could express, so John's calculation is more than one hundred million.
- All of these angels sing a song to the lamb, just like the song to the one on the throne.

They sing that the Lamb is worthy to receive, "power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing".

- Why is He worthy to receive these things?
- These things come from Him, and whatever we have we owe back to Him!
- Whatever good thing we have flows first from Jesus Christ, even when we don't acknowledge it.

Once more John's perspective pulls back to where he hears "every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, in the sea, and all that is in them" singing.

- At one moment, John hears ALL intelligent life in the universe singing to the Lamb.
- This is a vision of a future reality that won't happen until the final consummation (Phil. 2:10-11), but it's shown to John in this moment.

Imagine how overwhelming this would be to John!

- As the song commences, the four living creatures have the final word: "Amen" (which means, "may it be so").
- The elders have the final deed: they fell and worshiped, as they had been doing before.
- There is no doubt now as to who the hero and main character of Revelation is: it's Jesus, the Lion and the Lamb.

- **God is more glorious, amazing, and will receive more praise in eternity than you can possibly ever imagine.**
- **God knows more and is intimately involved in the details of your future and your story more than you can ever imagine.**
- **God listens and responds to your prayers and worship of Him more than you can imagine.**