

Revelation Ch. 5: Worthy Is The Lamb

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Verse 1

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals

The description of the scroll shows that it provides valuable information:

- 1) Right hand – God is protecting the message until the appointed time.
- 2) Written inside and on the back – The message is complete, with no room for anything else.
- 3) Seven Seals – The message has been completely sealed. A seal showed the authenticity of a message.

We see that Ezekiel had a similar scroll, containing things that would happen upon Jerusalem (Ezek. 2:9-10; 3ff.). The scroll contained the great mystery about to be completely unveiled (Rom. 16:25-26; 1 Cor. 2:10-16; Eph. 3:1-5; Rev. 10:7).

Verse 2

Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

Not even the strongest of God's creation could open the scroll (cf. 2 Pet. 2:11). One was needed who was “worthy,” meaning that this individual would be deserving to unleash its contents, and take full responsibility for what happens.

Verse 3

And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

Nobody anywhere was found worthy, because no one short of God Himself could take full responsibility for the scroll. This was a job for a King, and certainly no man was worthy (Rom. 3:23), nor were angels (v. 2).

Verse 4

So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

He wept because he was told to write down this important information (1:19), and it looked like he was not going to be able to accomplish that. He wanted to do what He was told, and He wanted to know the will of God.

Verse 5

But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

It appeared that nobody was able to open the scroll, but one of the elders makes it clear that there was.

- 1) Lion of the tribe of Judah – Jesus was the prophesied lion of Judah (Gen. 49:9-10; Heb. 7:14), King of Kings, and Lord of Lords (1:5; 1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:16).
- 2) Root of David – Jesus was of the ancestry of David (Acts 2:30; 2 Sam. 7; 2 Tim. 2:8), but also existed before David (cf. Isa. 11:1, 10; Matt. 22:41-46). He was both the offspring and origin of

the Davidic line (Rev. 22:16).

Jesus was worthy because He had prevailed over death (Jn. 16:33; Rom. 6:9), and had been granted all authority in heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36). This wicked generation had sinned against Him, and it was He who would repay (Heb. 10:29-31; Matt. 27:25).

Verse 6

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

The glorious visions of Jesus in chapter one, and the previous picture of a lion are contrasted with a lamb. A lamb is innocent, gentle, and pure. A slain lamb was a symbol of sacrifice (1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19; cf. Jn. 1:29; Isa. 53:7). How did Jesus prevail to open the scroll? How did He ascend back to the throne? He sacrificed His own life (Heb. 9:26; 10:12). He had died but now stood alive (1:18).

It doesn't seem like a lamb would stand a chance against the beasts of the world (Rev. 13), and the dragon (Rev. 12) roaming the earth (cf. 1 Pet. 5:8). Though Christianity does not seem like much to many people (1 Cor. 1:27), it is the most powerful kingdom (Dan. 2:44), led by the most powerful ruler in the world (Rev. 19:16).

having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The Lamb has complete power, and sees all things (cf. 4:5) through the Holy Spirit whom He has sent (cf. 3:1; Jn. 15:26). In this phrase we have a description of the omnipotence (horns), omniscience (eyes), and omnipresence (sent into all the earth) of God.

Verse 7

Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Notice that Jesus took the scroll, rather than have it handed over. Perhaps this connects with the fact that we have to take what God offers in order to receive it. Jesus was positioned at the throne and given all authority when He ascended (cf. Dan. 7:13, 14), and with that took possession of the scroll that would pronounce judgment on Jerusalem.

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 elders and living creatures that had praised God the Father, now bow down before the Lamb. The harps and incense are no more literal than the elders and creatures. We are told the prayers symbolize the prayers of the saints (cf. Ps. 141:2), and so the harps must symbolize music. The fact that the elders have these things symbolizes their leadership in these acts of worship. God alone is worthy of worship (Rev. 19:10; 22:8, 9).

Verse 9

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

They sang a song that was different than what they had sung previously (Rev. 4:11). Isaiah prophesied of a new song that would be sung when the Messiah came (Isa. 42:8-10).

The NASB says “purchased for God with your blood men from every tribe...” To be redeemed to God then means to be purchased (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 7:23), bought back, and reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10). We have the wages of sin paid in full (cf. Rom. 6:23). Jesus is worthy of praise because of Who He is and what He has done. He is worthy to open the scroll because the judgment is His to deliver, the vengeance His to repay (Heb. 10:30).

Verse 10

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth

To have our sins forgiven is to be made part of the kingdom, that of priests who can approach God (see 1:6). Since Jesus is presently King, and the kingdom is a present kingdom (1:6, 9; Col. 1:13), then we reign on the earth right now (cf. 2:26; 3:21).

Verse 11

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands

The large number here is presented to enhance the picture. There are many angels in heaven (Heb. 12:22).

Verse 12

saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

All the praises offered to God and the Lamb magnify the importance of what He has done, and also emphasize that He is indeed in control. The events about to take place are a result of His just judgment (16:5, 6), and His ability and authority to carry them out. He has the wisdom to plan it, the power to accomplish it, and the strength to go through with it (cf. Heb. 10:29-31). All riches, true riches (cf. 2:9), and honor and glory and blessing belong to Him.

Verse 13

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!”

Read Psalm 150:6. The creation is telling of the awesome character of God (Rom. 1:20; Ps. 8; 19).

Verse 14

Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!”

Amen means “so be it” or “let it be.” It is a statement of desire and agreement. Since the four living creatures represent the creation as it reflects the attributes of God (4:6-11), of course they would agree.

And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

The elders repeatedly humble themselves and worship God, recognizing that their authority comes from Him, and only through Him could they have gained the victory.

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