

## The Scroll and the Lamb

### Revelation 5:1-14

**MPS** Jesus is the Lamb of God who is worthy of all worship because He was slain and yet He lives.

**OBJ** Every person should worship Jesus as worthy because of Three Heavenly Truths.

#### READ Revelation 5:1-14

*Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" <sup>3</sup>And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, <sup>4</sup>and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. <sup>5</sup>And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."*

*<sup>6</sup>And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup>And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. <sup>8</sup>And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup>And they sang a new song, saying,*

*"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup>and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

*<sup>11</sup>Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup>saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"*

*<sup>13</sup>And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*

*<sup>14</sup>And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

Revelation 4 introduces us to the Throne Room of Heaven, where God is seated in His Sovereign reign over all, and sourcing all things by His unending glory. As we move to Revelation 5 the vision continues, but a noticeable occurs.

[.1-2 The Dilemma] John's attention is immediately drawn back to a scroll in the right hand of God on the Throne. Most scrolls had writing on only one side, but this scroll was filled on both sides with writing. Scrolls were the books of the first century, typically used for reading in public venues, such as worship. But they differ from the way we might conceptualize them. With two large, wooden spindals on either end, and papyrus rolled up on them, scrolls can be very large, ornate, and heavy. I saw scrolls this last year in Israel whose spindals were more than four feet in length. And the more prominent its use, the larger and more ornate it would be. [One can only imagine Heaven's scroll that John saw!](#)

**The scroll was in God's right hand and sealed with seven seals.** Held in the right hand denotes a sign of authority and sovereignty for what is written within. Seals were placed along the seam of the scroll, a familiar practice in correspondence. And only the person for whom the letter was intended was authorized to break the seal and open the letter. The act of breaking the seal denoted authority, or authorization, to do so. The most important part here is that the seals kept the scroll closed, the sovereign will of God contained as a mystery because there was no one worthy to break the seals. [What John describes tells us that the scroll contained the sovereign will of the One enthroned and was held by His authority.](#)

[.3-4 The Problem] A strong angel inquires across Heaven, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And as the echo of the question wafts away the deafening silence descends. Verse 3 records that there was no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth worthy to open the scroll or look into it. This three-part reference notes the comprehensiveness of



the proclamation, that the whole cosmos had been thoroughly searched and no one found worthy.<sup>1</sup> The concern here “is with worthiness, not naked power.”<sup>2</sup> The scroll could not be opened because someone wanted them to be opened, nor because all of human existence needed them to be opened.<sup>3</sup> The scroll would only be opened by one worthy to open them. No one was found with the authority to answer the angel’s inquiry. At this John is stricken with sorrow and wept. [John was overcome by the realization that what could be known of God and His will for all things, as recorded in the scroll, will not be known because there is no one worthy to open the scroll.](#)

**TRANS** Verse 4 ends with a hopelessness of eternal magnitude. Then one of the elders speaks to John.

[.5 The Answer] *“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”* One of the elders pierces the silence by addressing John’s sadness with hope. He tells John to behold the Lion of Judah, the Root of David who has conquered and is worthy to open the scroll. These two references reveal the worthiness of the One to whom they refer. Lions were a symbol of strength and authority, but this Lion was even more. “Lion of Judah” is the fulfillment of Genesis 49:9-10. And the “Root of David” a title from Isaiah 11(.1-10) that identifies Him as the One who would come for the salvation of God’s people, who is worthy to open the scroll because he has conquered. Scholar George Eldon Ladd explains, “The verb literally says, “he has won a victory.” Here is a great mystery. In some way extending far beyond our understanding, the death of Christ on the cross was a victory over the enemies of God’s people.”<sup>4</sup> John’s tears of sadness become the headwaters for his river of joy!

[.6-10] John looks and beholds a Lamb. “Lamb” is the image John saw that represented Jesus Christ. This image “combines the background of the Passover lamb of Exodus 11-12 with the Suffering Servant lamb of Isaiah 52-53 to represent Jesus Christ (Rev 5:6).”<sup>5</sup> “When John turned to look at the Lion, he did not see a Lion, but a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain. The final victory of Christ as the Lion of the tribe of Judah—as the conquering Messiah—is possible only because he has first suffered as the Lamb.”<sup>6</sup> Jesus brings the whole plan of God in redemption together. The wounds of sacrifice become the scars of victory. [The Lamb is adorned with perfection, seven horns for perfect power and seven eyes to perceive and know all things, to perfectly accomplish the will of the Father, and to set Him apart from all others as worthy.](#)<sup>7</sup>

**The Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of Him seated on the Throne.** Be careful not to pass over this statement. The dilemma and problem of all ages is here resolved in perfect unity. There is no struggle nor opposition. The Lamb takes the scroll because the One enthroned holding the scroll places it in his hand. One scholar sees this as “a thought impossible to visualize, but magnificent as a symbol of the death of Christ and its results. In his own way, John is expressing the perfect harmony between the will of God and the will of Christ.”<sup>8</sup> [Our Triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are captured in John’s vision in perfect unity of will and work.](#)

**The taking of the scroll activates the worship of Heaven.** The four living creatures and the elders fall down in worship, filling heaven with music and prayers as they sing a new song. With a common introduction of worthiness, this song centers on the work of the Lamb accomplishing the Will of God. The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals because

<sup>1</sup> Ian Paul, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), ed. Eckhard J. Schnabel, vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (London: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 131. Paul notes, “the traditional three-tiered view of the universe, not to be taken literally but to emphasize that there is no-one in all the cosmos who can open the scroll.”

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 96.

<sup>3</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 84. Ladd explains, “The important thing to emphasize is that the biblical hope is not one of spiritual salvation alone, of the salvation of the individual from his guilt and his sin. While individualistic salvation is included, the primary emphasis is upon the salvation of the people of God as a society dwelling on the earth and their deliverance from all evils—spiritual, social, political, and physical.”

<sup>4</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 84.

<sup>5</sup> Scott Duvall, [The Heart of Revelation: Understanding The 10 Essential Themes of the Bible’s Final Book](#) (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 16.

<sup>6</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 85.

<sup>7</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament, 98. Morris states, “The Lamb had seven horns. In the Old Testament the horn is frequently used as a symbol of strength (e.g. Deut. 33:17). Seven is the number of perfection, so the seven horns indicate the perfect might of the Lamb.”

<sup>8</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament, 99.



He was slain. “His worthiness is now not reckoned in terms of his power or of the majesty of his Person, but of his death for us. Sinners are purchased for God. Redemption is not aimless; they are bought so that they may belong to God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19–20).”<sup>9</sup> The Lamb was slain, killed for sacrificial purposes, but now stands in Heaven’s highest place. By His blood, the Lamb ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and made them a kingdom and priests to God, to reign with Him. [Do not miss what John envisions: the greatest atrocity of injustice and evil perpetrated on earth has become the highest sacrifice in Heaven, not because of those who carried it out but because of the One slain, the Lamb of God. And by that sacrifice, the unifying work of the Triune God centers all worship.](#)

[.11-14] **The worship of Heaven spreads without limitation.** What began with the four living creatures and the elders now moves throughout all heaven, “*numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands*”. John tells us that the number of those worshiping was innumerable. And their song was of the absolute worthiness of the Lamb! [The resound of Heaven filled with the song of the Lamb’s worthiness.](#)

**The resound of heaven pours forth of the worthiness of the Lamb to fill the whole earth.** Look who is included in John’s vision: “*every creature in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that is in them*” declaring the worthiness of the Lamb. From the all-encompassing search in verse 3 for one worthy comes a compounded chorus of even greater magnitude. The whole of creation silent in the search were not absent, but watching, likely weeping in hopelessness with John, but now pour forth in joining heaven in worship of the Lamb. What began in heaven poured forth throughout all creation. [John makes clear: no part of creation fails to worship the Lamb because He is worthy of all.](#)

[Jesus is the Lamb of God who is worthy of all worship because He was slain and yet He lives.](#)

[Gospel] The Lamb’s blood shed in sacrifice was paid to God and applied for the ransom of people from sin.(Rev 5:9) In this glorious truth, the dilemma of sinful humanity is solved. Satan, sin, death, and the grave are defeated by entering into each and overcoming.(Eph 4:9; 2 Cor 5:21; Matt 27:50; Mark 15:46) [By the Lamb, the schism with God is closed;](#) holiness and righteousness vindicated; justice perfectly fulfilled; wrath consumed, guilt and blame absolved; the most glorious of miraculous peace accords is ratified (Col 1:20); the dead are made alive(Eph 2:5); the lost are found(Luke 15:32); those buried in sin’s debt are redeemed(Eph 1:7); the enslaved are set free(Gal 5:1); enemies are made Ambassadors(Rom 5:10; 2 Cor 5:20); orphans are made children of the Father(John 14:18; Rom 8:15; 1 John 3:1); and rebels are made royal heirs of the King(Rom 8:17). [The firstborn of all creation\(Col 1:15\) is the firstborn of the resurrection\(Col 1:18\) for all who believe.](#)

Friend, Jesus activates the worship of heaven and all creation; He is worthy of all your worship! [Heaven declares and the scars testify, “Behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.”\(John 1:29\); He is worthy!](#)

[OBJ Three Heavenly Truths commend and activate all our worship of Jesus as worthy today.](#)

### [1. Heaven is not absent of but anchors our hope: the Lamb who was slain is alive.](#)

The search of verse 3 shook John, but not so much as a tremor in heaven. The Lamb who was slain stands at the Throne alive and worthy. And His work activates the worship of heaven and all creation. Hope can only be shaken when we stand far off or removed. But when the Lamb who is worthy activates our worship, we stand unmoved in hope by Him. The closer you stand to the Lamb, the firmer you stand. The more you stay focused on the Lamb, the greater Heaven’s worship resounds from your whole life. [The Lamb who was slain is alive and worthy; all heaven pours forth His eternal hope of glory.](#)

### [2. God holds history in His hand: what will be will be as He says.](#)

What shall be is held in the right of the One who sits on Heaven’s throne. And there is One worthy to take and open the scroll. “Christ, and Christ alone, has the key to the meaning of human history.”<sup>10</sup> It can be easy to forget this today in a world where it seems wickedness and evil run unabated. But we must never forget: “However strong evil becomes, however fierce

<sup>9</sup> Leon Morris, [Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 20, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 100.

<sup>10</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 82.



be the satanic evils that assail God's people on earth, history still rests in God's hand."<sup>11</sup> "The one who controls both ends of history also stand in sovereign over everything in the middle. Again, God is in control."<sup>12</sup> [The scroll is filled with God's will. History is recorded, and the end from the beginning has been set. God wins; He rules!](#)

What may at times seem like inattention from God is not. He is not losing, worried, not anxious. Rather, He is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to eternal life. (2 Peter 3:9) But God will not be mocked forever. The stench from cultural decay of wickedness in openly-celebrated, vile immorality of every form and manner, the celebration of brutal slaying of the most precious and innocent, the open worship and adoration of evil personified, the open mocking, derision, and dismissal of God's Law by people, and especially those in government positions that are ordained by God, will not go unabated forever. The world is not as they claim. It is not as their news feed purports. They are not in control, they do not know better, and the truth they espouse will be revealed by the Light. [The Lamb who was slain holds the scroll of God, and He is the One who holds all history.](#)

### 3. [Christian, we are the Kingdom, priests of God to declare the excellencies of His praise.](#)

The knowledge and glory of God is filling the earth as the waters cover the sea! (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14) "The goal of Revelation is to bring encouragement to believers of all ages that God is working out His purposes even in the midst of tragedy, suffering, and apparent Satanic domination. It is the Bible's battle cry of victory, for in it, more than anywhere else in the NT, is revealed the final victory of God over all the forces of evil. As such, it is an encouragement to God's people to persevere in the assurance that their final reward is certain and to worship and glorify God despite trials and despite temptations to march to the world's drumbeat."<sup>13</sup> We are part of the resound on earth declaring the praise and excellencies of God now. [We were purchased for God to serve the glory of the Lamb! Every utterance of worship is a battle cry; every prayer prayed, every song sung, every testimony shared, is a resonation of Heaven across the earth that He is worthy!](#)

[Jesus is the Lamb of God who is worthy of all worship because He was slain and yet He lives.](#)

**CLOSE** Allow me to conclude with these words. Many series in Revelation stop here, and there is a reason for this. Chapters 1-5 are written in the plainest language and comprise the most important parts to understand the whole book. IF you ever lose sight of God's Throne Room, you will be blinded to or deceived by the rest of Revelation. As one scholar states, "Kingdoms come and go, but God on his throne remains forever. The center of all reality is the triune God on his throne. The throne image enters and anchors and grounds everything else. All the subsequent visions in the book originate from the throne of God, the ultimate and true center of reality." The throne-room vision of Revelation 4 also helps us adopt a kingdom perspective of our lives now."<sup>14</sup> But when people think of Revelation, they seldom begin with the Throne and almost exclusively think of dragons, beasts, and the other-worldly characters in the book. I want you to understand this: IF you fail to rightly prioritize chapters 4-5, whatever you get from the rest will not be right. Any study of Revelation that fails to understand the apocalyptic imagery by the Throne-room illumination is simply an abomination. Revelation is not to show us the magnitude of Armageddon, but the Almighty who is sovereign. God will win the same way He has always won, with a Word. And what WILL BE then is not most important for you to know so you can avoid the difficulty or suffering of that day. But, so that you can know today that the God you know and that knows you is the One who is already victorious on that Day and sufficient and worthy for any suffering you will encounter. The clearer your vision of the Throne Room, the bigger Jesus will be in your heart and mind. The bigger Jesus becomes in your heart, the smaller everything becomes. The most important application from Revelation is that your heart is so filled with the Almighty who is one the Throne now, that no matter what follows your heart is set. [Is your heart wholly set on, your faith fully absolved in, and all your hope solely sourced from the Almighty who is enthroned?](#)

<sup>11</sup> George Eldon Ladd, [A Commentary on the Revelation of John](#), 83.

<sup>12</sup> Scott Duvall, [The Heart of Revelation: Understanding The 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book](#) (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 23.

<sup>13</sup> G. K. Beale and David H. Campbell, [Revelation: A Shorter Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015), 1.

<sup>14</sup> Scott Duvall, [The Heart of Revelation: Understanding The 10 Essential Themes of the Bible's Final Book](#) (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019), 25-26.

