

The Revelation of Jesus Christ

Worthy is the Lamb

Rev. 5:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing with the vision that started in chapter 4 where John was summoned up into heaven in the Spirit. There he saw the throne room of God and the worship that was taking place. We also learned that this vision was to encourage God's people as they are assaulted and opposed and persecuted throughout this period of time known as the last days. Although men are going through all of this chaos down here on earth, up above God is on His throne in heaven. Thus our destiny is secure with Him.

Here in chapter 5 the vision continues, but the emphasis shifts off of the one who is on the throne and turns its attention to this visionary figure of a Lamb standing, as if slain.

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 5 (NASB)

The Book with Seven Seals

5 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. ⁴ Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; ⁵ and one of the elders *said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

⁶ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. ⁸ When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they *sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

¹⁰ "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice,

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”

¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying,

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Prayer

BODY:

I. THE BOOK WITH SEVEN SEALS.

As we enter into chapter 5 we encounter a problem. That problem is that there is a book in heaven that needs to be opened. But the book is sealed with seven seals.

You see seals were used throughout the ancient world. A seal was placed on objects to display the authority of the one who sealed the contents of the object. That seal cannot be broken without the permission of the one who put it there or by someone with greater authority than the one who put it there.

Take, for example, Jesus' tomb. The Pharisees were concerned that the disciples of Jesus would come and steal His body so they asked Pilate to seal the tomb. Pilate granted their request by placing guards at the tomb to watch it and sealed the tomb. If anyone were to break that seal they would be put to death. So the seals were used to signify the authority of the one sealing whatever was inside and it could not be broken by just anybody.

So here in chapter 5 we see a book and it has been sealed with seven seals. As you already know, numbers are not to be taken literally in Revelation. Seven suggests that it has been sealed by God Himself. We are told that the book rests in the hand of Him Who is on the throne. It is in God's hand, so getting it open is a problem because God will only allow One Who is worthy to open it.

In verse two we see this mighty angel declaring throughout heaven “**Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?**” Who would have authority equal to God! Who is worthy? Who has a status and a standing high enough to open it?

And John discovered “**And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it**” and he begins weeping. The literal Greek translation indicates that John was weeping uncontrollably.

So you ask, “What is **so** important about this book that it gets such a reaction within John?” John has already seen a pretty incredible vision so far. He has seen the presence of God sitting on the throne and all of the glory around it. He has seen the four living

creatures, the 24 elders, and all the angels worshipping God. And we read nothing of his reaction to it. But then this book causes him to weep uncontrollably. So why? What is it about this book?

Well, he had to know that what was in it was very significant. More than that, he had to know that it was pertaining to the events that were to take place on earth.

That is what he was summoned up into heaven to see, right?

Revelation 1:1 (NASB)

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him (Jesus) to show to His bond-servants (all Christians by a vision to John), the things which must **soon** take place; and He sent and communicated *it* by His angel to His bond-servant John,

John was summoned up into heaven in the Spirit to see the events that would take place during the **last days** which the scriptures define as the time period between Christ's ascension and His second coming.

This is why John was summoned up into heaven to see and he knows that the contents are within this book. The expectation is that we should have an idea of that as well.

John understood what was in this book because of the prophecy of this same vision that was written by Daniel.

II. THE TIMING OF THIS VISION.

I have gone over this before but many of you were not here. It is very important that you understand the timing in order to understand the vision. I want to read a few key verses from Daniel 7 so you can see the similarity of John's vision to that of Daniel and understand the timing of John's vision.

Daniel 7:9-10 (NASB)

⁹ "I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took *His* seat; His vesture *was* like white snow And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne *was* ablaze with flames, Its wheels *were* a burning fire. ¹⁰ "A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, **And the books were opened.**

Daniel 7:13-14 (NASB)

¹³ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, (As we learned in Revelation 1:13 a few weeks ago, it is important to note that the only time that "coming with the clouds of heaven" and "Son of man" are used together in the Old Testament is here in Daniel 7) **And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.**

Where is the Ancient of Days dwelling? The Ancient of Days is God. He is in HEAVEN!

So here is the question. Where did the clouds of the Son of man take Him? HEAVEN!

Whenever we read "And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming," what do we immediately think of?

Christ's second coming, right? Jesus coming from the heavens to the earth.

But Daniel says "No!" "**Coming in the clouds like a Son of man**" is coming from the earth and going to Heaven!

Isn't that what it says? Let me read it again.

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.

The clouds take Him to the presence of the Ancient of Days in Heaven! Then we read verse 14. **This is the point!** Every time that the phrase "**Coming in the clouds like a Son of man**" is used it is used as kingdom language. Listen to verse 14.

¹⁴ "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every* language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

What is that describing? The establishment of the kingdom! God gave Christ dominion, Glory, and a kingdom when He came from earth and appeared before God in Heaven.

Now! I want to ask the question, when did Jesus go from earth to Heaven in a cloud? **(Repeat)** When did Jesus go from earth to Heaven in a cloud? **THE ASCENSION!**

When did Jesus' kingdom get established? **When He went to heaven in a cloud!**

It is very important to understand what Daniel is telling us here in order to make sense of Revelation. The kingdom was established by Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection. John uses this passage in the Old Testament to describe the establishment of the everlasting kingdom that will not be destroyed.

For that reason the words of the book were sealed up until the time of the end. Christ had not come as redeemer at that time. He had not yet paid the ransom. He was not yet, the lamb that had been slain.

Daniel 12:9 (NASB)

⁹ He said, "Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.*

John realizes that now is the time for that book to be unsealed. So the expectation is that this book is going to reveal events that are going to happen in the time of the end. It has to do with the last days.

It is very important that you understand this. When the New Testament talks about the last days it is not talking about some future days. It is talking about the days that were started with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Peter makes it clear in Acts chapter 2, when he cites Joel's prophecy and says...

Acts 2:17-21 (NASB)

¹⁷ 'And it shall be in the last days,' God says, 'That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ Even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ 'And I will grant wonders in the sky above And signs on the earth below, Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned into darkness And the moon into blood, **Before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.** ²¹ 'And it shall be that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

The last days were inaugurated on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down and will continue until Christ physically comes again.

The book contains what is going to take place throughout this entire period of the last days. John, of course, does not know the specifics of what is in the book, but he probably has a good idea. This is because the visions that are found here are drawing upon visions that we see elsewhere in the Old Testament.

John knows that God's people need to hear what is written in the book. They need to hear and understand what these last days are going to be like. They need to know that in the last days Christians will be live in hardship and suffering on earth, but it will also be a time of hope for the believer. John does not want the believers to lose hope when they see things on earth seemingly spinning wildly out of control.

It is easy for believers to feel this way when we see God's people getting brutalized. And at the same time it appears that God's enemies are prospering through all of this. Things seem to fall in place for them. And it can cause us to scratch our heads and wonder **what is going on here!**

When we are able to stand back and look at the big picture from God's perspective, we start to see what is really happening in the grand scheme of things in life and history and it changes things.

John knew that that was what was needed by believers in the last days. So when no one was found to open the seals to the book, John weeps uncontrollably!

III. WORTHY IS THE LAMB.

And then John hears, "**Stop weeping**". Why?

"The Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

As most of you already know this is referring to Jesus. The lion from the tribe of Judah is referring back to Genesis 49:10. In Is. 11:1 we are told that a new branch will spring up from the stump of Jesse. In Is. 11:10 we are told that this new branch is also the root of Jesse.

How can one branch be the root but also the branch? In Rev. 22:16 Jesus says He is the Root and Offspring of David.

Revelation 22:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."

He existed before David; but He also came through David's lineage. He who was with God at creation became human. He was, and is, and is to come. So John turns and there he sees...not a lion...but a Lamb! It is a Lamb that appears to be slain, but it is standing. It

is the REDEMPTIVE LAMB, Jesus Christ, who was crucified on the cross for our sins. The Lamb Who, by being slain, has become the Lion.

John hears the angels say that the Lamb is worthy to open the seals. The lamb had seven horns and seven eyes. Remember this is visionary. This does not mean that when we ascend to heaven we are going to see a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes.

As we know, in Revelation, numbers are symbolic. Seven means fullness or completion.

The symbol of a horn represents power, powerful kingdoms, or powerful nations. What this is indicating is that this lamb has complete or absolute power and authority as the Almighty King.

He also has seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God. Eyes speak of the ability to see. Seven eyes means that He sees absolutely everything. In theological terms, this means omniscience. The seven spirits, as we learned from the last chapter is the fullness of God's spirit, or the Holy Spirit that dwells within the believers. Thus the triune God sees and knows absolutely everything. There is nothing that is hidden from His view.

Thus when we put this vision all together, we have a vision of an all-powerful, all-knowing, conquering King Who conquered by His death and resurrection. That, of course, is meant to give complete comfort to John and to all of God's people in these last days.

The One Who has the authority to open these seals is the One Who loved you so much that He gave His life for you that you may be able to overcome. Then we see Jesus take the book out of the right hand of God.

Once again we see the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and thousands and thousands of angels bowing before the lamb and worshipping Him.

Revelation 5:9b-10 (NASB)

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

¹⁰ “You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

CONCLUSION:

Praise of God, on earth and in heaven, is a spontaneous response to a recognition of the nature and character of God. Just as when we witness a great performance by a musician, athlete, or artist, we want to express our admiration through shouting, applause, and a standing ovation. So too, when any created being is truly confronted with the majesty of God, the natural and spontaneous response is praise.

Because of Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection, Jesus has been given authority over all heaven and earth. He has established a new kingdom. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we become part of His eternal kingdom. Our testimony and faithfulness even unto death will allow us to overcome.

He is Lord!