

Blessed Are Those: A Journey through Revelation – Part 6

Worthy Is the Lamb - Rev. 5:1-14

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Feb. 9th, 2025

Intro:

- Before we turn to our passage for today, Revelation chapter five (page 1065 pew Bible), it is good for us to remember a few things.
- First, let's remember the promise of this book and the verse on which our series title is based. **Rev 1:3** “**Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.**” There is a blessing that is promised to those who read the words of this prophecy, to those who hear the words of the prophecy, to those who take to heart (guard, treasure) the words of this prophecy.
- Second, let's think about the person to whom this book was revealed—John. He was the beloved friend of Jesus, an apostle tasked with communicating about Jesus and establishing and overseeing His church. He was currently in exile, suffering for his faith, word, and witness. John describes himself as our “**brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus**” (Rev 1:9). The life of a Christian is composed of these three things: suffering . . . and kingdom . . . and patient endurance . . .
- Third, remember that the purpose of this book is to show that **God is sovereign over history and will ultimately triumph over all evil through Jesus Christ, bringing eternal victory, justice, and restoration to His people.** It encourages believers to persevere in faith despite trials, persecution, and the power of evil forces, assuring them that Christ's victory is certain, and His kingdom will reign forever.
- So far in Revelation, we have seen the glorious vision of the person of Christ, who walks among the churches, whose hair is as white as wool, whose face is as the shining sun, whose eyes are like a blazing fire, whose voice is like rushing waters, whose tongue is like a double-edged sword, and whose feet are like glowing bronze. In one hand, He holds the seven stars, and in the other hand, He holds the keys to death and Hades (Rev 1:12-18). From Him, we have heard the seven messages to the seven churches with their praises, problems, and promises.
- Then, in chapter four, we are ushered into the very throne room of heaven, where we behold God, His majesty, mystery, and might. We are included in the worship of God from the elders, to the angels, to all creation who proclaim, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come” (Rev 4:8), and “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being” (Rev 4:11).
- We return today to this image of the throne room of heaven, where we are confronted with the dilemma of who can open the sealed scroll, the scroll that contains the destiny and plan of all things. From this chapter, we will discover the one who is worthy and who is able, and we will learn the new song of His glory. Through this we renew our trust in the one who is both a lion and a lamb.

Who is worthy?

Rev 5:1-4 NIV

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” 3 But no one in heaven or

on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. 4 I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.

- After all this glory, all this imagery, all these songs, there is a “zooming-in” on the right hand of God the Father. In His hand is a scroll with writing on both sides, and it is sealed with seven seals. What is this scroll, and why is it so important?
- This scroll is the sealed will of God for the unfolding and unveiling of His plan for the culmination and conclusion of His creation. Nancy Guthrey says that “the scroll represents the decrees of God concerning the unfolding of God’s plans for judgment and salvation that were established before the foundations of the world, set in motion by Christ’s death and resurrection” (*Blessed*, p. 95). G. K. Beale writes that the scroll contains “all sacred history, especially from the cross to the new Creation” (*Revelation: A Shorter Commentary*, p. 112).
- The scroll has writing on both sides, indicating that God’s decrees are all-encompassing and thorough. What is inscribed on the scroll is exact, and it is sealed to show that it is complete and unchangeable. This is God’s plan for the completion of time. And there is no one worthy enough to break the seals to enact this plan.
- This is enough to make a grown man cry. Not just cry, but weep and weep. Why is John weeping like this? John wept with shame for the entire human race’s failure to be so much less than what God had originally intended. Perhaps he wept in personal shame, recognizing his own failure to live up to what God intended for him. However, his weeping was about much more.
- He wept because if no one was found worthy to open the scroll, then there would be no end to the suffering of this world. There would be no confidence in good triumphing over evil. There would be no assurance that justice would finally be done. There would be no ultimate victory for God’s people. No experience of promised blessings. No new heaven, no new earth. No end to sin and death. No hope.
- He weeps because he fears things might not turn out the way he had hoped. Lee Eclov wrote, “Unless that scroll is opened, all the suffering, kingdom living, and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus would be for nothing. If our tears are ever to end, if suffering and patient endurance are to ever be worth it, if the kingdom we cannot see is ever to be our home, someone must be found to open that scroll!”
- So why couldn’t God the Father just open it Himself? Because the plan could not be enacted unless there was someone worthy to enact it. His plan required someone who could justly redeem His creation and judiciously mete out His wrath. Is there anyone worthy of this?

He is able

Rev 5:5 NIV

Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

- There was no one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth who could open the scroll. None are worthy of this. However, there is one who is beyond both heaven and earth, who was foretold of long ago. This one was “the Lion of the tribe of Judah,” the one Jacob—whose name was changed to Israel—said would be a descendant of his son Judah. He would have the scepter and the ruler’s staff, and He would have the obedience of the peoples (Gen. 49:8-12).
- This one was “the Root of David” who the prophet Isaiah said would come forth from the stump of Jesse (David’s dad) and bear fruit. This is the one whom the Spirit of the Lord will

rest upon, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. He is the one of whom all the nations will inquire, and whose resting place will be glorious (Isa. 11:1-10).

- He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals because He has triumphed. To this, we must ask some questions: What did He triumph over? How did He win? And what was His reward? Surely, as a Lion, it was because of His great strength and ferocity. Surely, as the anointed Root of David, it was because of His great wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. These things are true, but not as we suppose.

Rev 5:6-7 NIV

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

- He is introduced as the Lion, and He is seen as the Lamb, looking as if it had been slain. Now, mind you, this is no ordinary lamb. This Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes, signifying that it is all-powerful and all-knowing, omnipotent and omniscient, and yet in the form of a lamb, looking as if it had been slain.
- God's power and wisdom are demonstrated and displayed in the Son through His perfect submission to the Father and His perfect sacrifice as a lamb. In so doing, the love of God satisfied the justice of God so the grace of God may be extended to those who have faith in God to be saved from the wrath of God on sin. Jesus is the one through whom God's plan for all creation—from the beginning to the end—is enacted and fulfilled. **“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor 5:21)**. All of the Old Testament law and the prophets point to Him. All of the New Testament gospels and letters point to Him. Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith (Heb. 12:2). He is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13), the one in whom all the glory and fullness of God dwells (Col. 2:9). In Him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). He is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll.
- At this point where Jesus takes the scroll, there is an overwhelming response of praise and worship. A new song emanates from those around the throne, building as myriads and myriads of angels join the song and as every creature joins in to sing. May our hearts sing and resonate with the new song of the Lamb who was slain.

Sing the new song

Rev 5:8-10 NIV

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. 10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

- This new song starts with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. They all bow before the Lamb as a gesture of submission and honor. They bring two things: worship and prayer. Songs blend, unify, and focus all minds and hearts, resonating with the same thoughts and emotions gathered together in a chorus of praise. Prayers. These are the prayers that continually go up before God as incense. These are the prayers of every cry of the heart, from every corner of the earth, that call out for justice, mercy, and deliverance. These are the homesick cries of all God's exiled people throughout all the ages. These prayers will be answered in the fullness of time and for all time.
- Through the blood of the Lamb, this fourfold group of people from every tribe, language, people group, and nation have been redeemed. They have been freed from the power and penalty of sin; they have been freed from death to life and will reign as priests to serve God in righteousness forevermore. This is indeed something to sing about.
- And then to this group, another vast group joins in singing.

Rev 5:11-12 NIV

Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. 12 In a loud voice they sang:

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!”

- I don't know what this will sound like. I was in choirs all throughout high school and college. I have sung in all-state groups of hundreds of singers and had chills run through my body as we sang. I can only imagine what this choir will sound like, with millions of angelic voices perfectly blending together in this glorious song of praise. All of them singing full-voiced of the worthiness of the Lamb who was slain, ascribing this sevenfold description of all power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise to Him, who is worthy of it all.
- And then the third group, every creature in all creation, now joins in this song.

Rev 5:13-14 NIV

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!”

14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

- Everything that is created is serving and honoring the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb. Can you imagine such harmony? Where all things are fully functioning in their designed purpose to honor and serve for the glory of God. With all that they have and all that they are, they are giving praise, honor, glory and power to God for ever and ever. This will be heaven indeed.
- And at this the four living creatures say “Amen” (let it be) and the elders fall down in worship. What a glorious and triumphant scene.

Conclusion

- We've walked with John into the throne room of Revelation, witnessing the moment when his anguished weeping is transformed into triumphant worship. At first, no one is found worthy to open the scroll in God's right hand, threatening to leave all of history's hope sealed away. But then Jesus, the Lion of Judah who is also the Lamb who was slain, steps forward. He is declared worthy to enact God's complete and final plan through His sacrificial victory. This vision should stir our hearts to worship, reminding us that our future, our hope, and our ultimate redemption rest in the power of the Lamb, whose wounds prove both His love and His lordship. From this glorious vision, let us:
 - *Worship the Lamb daily* - Let your prayers, songs, and meditations focus on Christ, who gave Himself for you and is now enthroned in majesty.
 - *Trust in Christ's sovereignty* - Life often presents unresolved questions and hardships, but the One holding the scroll is worthy. He presides over history and over your personal story. He will make all things right in the end.
 - *Live in perseverance* - Like John, persevere through trials, suffering, and the call to patience, knowing that Jesus has already overcome.
 - *Proclaim the worthy Lamb* - Since every tribe and nation is represented in God's plan, share the gospel near and far, inviting others into this grand redemption story.

Benediction

May the Lion of Judah and Lamb of God, who is worthy to open the scroll, fill you with steadfast hope and unwavering faith. As you go, may the love of the Father, the grace of Christ our Redeemer, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit empower you to live in joyful worship and patient endurance, until we join the heavenly chorus singing, "Worthy is the Lamb!" Amen.

Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service near the "Prayer" sign at the front of the sanctuary.

Questions for Growth Groups

1. **John's Tears** - Why did John weep so bitterly when no one could open the scroll, and how does that relate to moments of hopelessness in our own lives?
2. **Lion and Lamb** - How does seeing Jesus as both the Lion of Judah and the Lamb who was slain expand your understanding of His character and work?
3. **The Scroll's Significance** - In your own words, what does the scroll represent, and why is it so crucial to God's unfolding plan?
4. **A New Song** - What stands out to you about the "new song" in Revelation 5, and how might it shape our worship today?
5. **Prayer as Incense** - Revelation 5:8 depicts the prayers of the saints as incense. How does this imagery affect the way you view and engage in prayer?
6. **Worship and Witness** - The praise in Revelation 5 involves every creature. How should this vision motivate us to share Christ with all people?
7. **Living Under Christ's Rule** - What practical steps can you take this week to more fully align your life with the worthiness and reign of the Lamb?