

The Worthy Lamb  
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Revelation 5:1-14

One of the most devastating moments in life is the realization that someone you trusted fully, wasn't worthy of that trust. Because of sin, human beings will often disappoint us in that way. That's why we need someone without sin in whom we can trust. That's why we need Jesus. Our relationship with Him is all about FAITH.

Hebrews 11:1 tells us..."faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (ESV)

In 2 Corinthians 5:7 Paul taught..."we walk by faith, not by sight." (ESV)

This whole concept of faith is about believing though we haven't seen with human eyes. One day, as a song says, our faith will become sight. One day our eyes will confirm what our heart has believed. One day we'll witness the reality of our faith: the fact that Jesus is worthy of our trust, our love, and our soul. His death on the cross made him Savior. His position as the Son of God makes him King of all Kings and Lord of all. The "lamb that was slain" will become the "lion" that conquers, judges, and rules the new heaven and earth. The Apostle John got a glimpse of that in Revelation chapter five. Let's look over John's shoulder as we see what this text says, what it means, and what we are to do with it this week.

We pick up in chapter five where we left off in chapter four. John is watching the activity in the throne room where God is being worshiped continually. Then John notices something in the hand of God the Father. Look at verse one:

5 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.

- Before there was paper; before there were books; before there were digital documents; there were scrolls (this one IS stored in the cloud, though!)
- Scrolls in that day consisted of a writing material formed by the fibers of a water plant called papyrus. The material was rolled up on a wooden rod to make it portable.
- Scrolls usually contained legal documents like a will and testament or a title deed.
- To secure them they were sealed by globs of wax stamped with an official symbol.
- If you see an ancient statue of a great leader, they likely have a scroll in their hand.
- This scroll had seven seals. **Why is the number seven significant?**
- It begs the question: **Why was this scroll important? Any idea what it contains?**  
(For study: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/jamieson-fausset-brown/revelation/revelation-5.html> ; <http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/revelation/the-great-breakthrough> )

Warren Wiersbe writes...

*"The scroll represents Christ's "title deed" to all that the Father promised Him because of His sacrifice on the cross."*

2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the

scroll and break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

- The Father's plan to judge the world and overcome sin and death can only be completed if the seals are broken and His rightful heir opens the scroll.
- Without one, God's plan of redemption could not be revealed and completed. John is beside himself with sadness.

Chuck Swindoll writes:

*"John knew that if no one had been found worthy, the hopeless condition of the present world would continue indefinitely. If heaven's search for a worthy heir failed, so would his confidence in Jesus Christ."*<sup>2</sup>

- Sometimes, when life gets crazy, you and I may have a tendency to panic like John.
- Things are so out of control in this world we begin to question: "Will Jesus really come back to end sin and suffering and set things right?" Verse five answers the question.

5 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."

- The "Lion of the tribe of Judah." This is the only place in scripture this term is used.
- It alludes to Genesis 49:9-10 when Jacob blessed his son Judah as the father of the royal line of Israel and the ancestor to Jesus Christ.
- A lion represents power and dominion. We say a lion is the "king of the jungle."
- The term "root of David" is interesting because we know in human terms Jesus descended from the family of David. However, in eternal terms Jesus is the "root" or beginning of David's royal line and God's eternal plan (Isaiah 11:1,10.)
- John had to be relieved! The Lion of Judah is about to roar in judgment and victory.
- He turns to see this powerful image of a Lion, what he sees is not what he expects.

6 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.

- The image here is shocking and grotesque. A lamb that had clearly been slaughtered as a sacrifice is now on its feet. What's more, it has seven horns with seven eyes.
- **What do the horns of an animal represent in scripture? Last week we saw beasts covered in eyes. What did the eyes represent? Why seven of each?**
- Before Jesus came to earth Israel had expected a conquering warrior.
- When John saw this vision you know he remembered what he had written in his Gospel. He quoted the words of another man named John...John the Baptist:

John 1:29 (ESV)

<sup>29</sup> The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

- John expected a roaring lion and he saw a bloodied lamb. But it wasn't lying dead...it

- was a risen lamb with evidence of complete power and complete knowledge.
- Before sin could be conquered a price had to be paid. A price paid in blood.
- Only the “lamb that was slain” has the power to break the seals on God’s plan.

7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.

- **What is the significance about what the Lamb did in that verse?**
- When we realize that Jesus, the Lamb that was slain for our sins has the power to break the seals on God’s plan for judgment and redemption, there’s only one way to respond...look at verse eight:

8 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. 9 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,

10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,

and they shall reign on the earth.”

11 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,

12 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!”

13 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!”

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

- What a worship service! Let’s look at some specifics.
- Verse eight: **How does the image of “golden bowls of incense” containing the prayers of the saints speak to you?**
- Verse nine: **What is it that makes Jesus worthy to carry out God’s plan?**
- Verse ten: **What role will believers play in the new heaven and new earth?**
- Verses twelve and thirteen: **What is Jesus worthy of? What does that mean?**
- **How does this strange vision in Revelation chapter five comfort you about God’s plan for the end of time?**

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- Why study the book of Revelation? Because God doesn’t want us to be in doubt about how all this will work out! He has a plan and He has a LAMB.
- If, in a moment of discouragement, we question the reality of God’s plan to conquer sin and death, John has given us a reassuring picture to remember.

- There's only One who can take scroll, break the seals, and unleash God's plan for redemption. He's the One who gave His very life's blood to pay for our sins, and rose from the dead to offer mankind eternal resurrection.

Quoting Chuck Swindoll again:

*"Is anyone worthy to vanquish wickedness and usher in a world of true peace and prosperity? As the world continues its desperate and disappointing search for worldly answers to life's problems, the Bible reveals the solution in clear words and vivid images. In Revelation 5 we experience the inexpressible joy that John felt when the attention of all creation finally centers on the only One who can take the reins of history and tame a world spinning out of control—Jesus, the worthy Lamb."*<sup>3</sup>

- That should encourage you and me!

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 584). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Insights on Revelation (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 15) by Charles R. Swindoll

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*