

As we continue our expositional journey through the Revelation of Jesus Christ we now come to Revelation chapter five, if you will take your Bible and turn there with me. And this morning I have entitled my discourse to you, “The Worthy Lamb.”

Before we read the text and look into it I would like to give you a big picture of God’s plan of redemption. Some one has well said that history is really *his story*, the story of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if we look into the genealogical record of the book of Genesis we discover that God created the heavens and the earth about 6000 plus years ago, no more than 10,000 years ago. And some time before the creation of the earth Satan wanted to usurp the throne of God and install himself in his stead. And because of that God cast him down from heaven. As the anointed cherub he took with him a third of the angelic host in this inconceivable act of rebellion, all of which God had ordained.

Throughout history Satan’s goal has been—and continues to be—to thwart the purposes of God, to redeem a chosen people unto himself as well as to establish a glorious earthly kingdom. We witnessed Satan’s first salvo in the Garden of Eden where he tried to deceive and tempt Adam and Eve and successfully so. And as a result two amazing things occurred. And we read about them in Genesis chapter three and verse 15.

First of all, Satan’s ultimate defeat was then pronounced in that garden. God informed Satan that he would enjoy a minor victory over Christ saying that, “You shall bruise him on the heel.”¹ Indeed, Christ would suffer on earth. But, secondly, we learn that Christ would ultimately be the victor, for Christ would bruise Satan on the “head” and would give him a fatal blow.² And that fatal blow ultimately took place on the cross of Calvary.

From the very beginning of history God set into motion two things that he has ordained in eternity past. Number one, to redeem the people, number two, to restore the kingdom. And these two threads of divine purpose, dear friends, are woven through every single fabric of Scripture.

We see this in the promises that he originally made to Abraham, that out of a family would come a nation, would come a King, and would come a Savior to redeem the people. That out of that family there would come a nation, and that nation did come along, the nation of Israel. And God gave that nation his law. And in that nation we saw pictured a coming King through the dynasties of David and Solomon, a King that would one day redeem the people and restore the kingdom.

But, as we know, when the Lamb of God came, when the Lord Jesus Christ came as the King, that nation rejected their Messiah, their King. The Lamb was slain and the chosen family that became a nation rejected both the Lamb as well as the Lion that had been promised to that family. And so the King ascended back into heaven. The Lamb, however, fulfilled the law that was given to the nation and the law was permanently replaced by grace. And the nation was temporarily replaced by a body, a living organism

¹ See Genesis 3:15.

² Ibid.

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called the Church—joint heirs in the kingdom promises now became the theme for Jews and Gentiles. In fact, the apostle Paul said in Ephesians three verse four a great mystery of Christ has come,³ “which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.”⁴ And that, of course, is the mystery of the Church, Jews and Gentiles.

So, as we see in the Word of God, Israel as a nation is temporarily displaced. No longer are they the custodians of divine truth, but that responsibility was transferred to the Gentile Church. We now live in this Church age, one that began at Pentecost, as we read in Acts chapter two, where we saw the initial beginnings of the promised kingdom that will some day come to fruition. And before the king returns we are told in the Old Testament that there will be a regathering of that family that had become a nation, that dispersed and beleaguered people of Israel, that they would be regathered back into their ancient land of Palestine, and we see that happening today, a regathering where they would come and never again be removed.

And we are also told in the Word of God that prior to the earthly return of the Messiah king, that body which is the Church would be snatched away and then God would pour out his wrath upon the earth to judge the wicked and ultimately complete what he had promised to do, to reconcile a people unto himself and to establish a kingdom, a time when Satan and his demonic host will be cast into the lake of fire.

Now, dear friends, as we come to Revelation chapter five what we witness here is the drum roll to these pre-kingdom judgments. The almighty sovereign sitting upon his throne begins to stir. The days of his mercy have been spent. The cup of his indignation is full. He has had enough. Now his nostrils flare with righteous fury.

And what we are going to see is the almighty God of heaven reaching for a seven sealed scroll that contains the decrees of his will to finish the work of redeeming his people and restoring his kingdom. And only the Lamb that was slain—who is also the Lion that would be King—is able to enact the judgments contained within. This is what we have in Revelation five.

Follow along as I read this to you and then we will examine it more closely.

And 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. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

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 I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of

³ See Ephesians 3:4.

⁴ Ephesians 3:5.

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Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

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. And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

And 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, 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."

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." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.⁵

Beloved, what we have just read is a scene of future history, *his story*. And I would like to divide this short chapter into three sections so that we can better understand it. First, we will see the *seven-sealed scroll*, and then we will examine the *Lion of Judah*, and finally, *praise to the worthy Lamb*.

So let's, once again, reverently enter into this celestial court of our holy God that the beloved apostle has described for us, an ineffable scene of majesty and grandeur. May I remind you that he has described it as a place where dazzling white light mingled with fiery red is emanating from our glorious God that sits upon the throne. And around this throne is a rainbow of glistening emerald.

And in the foreground of the throne is an indescribably beautiful, deep blue expanse that looks like a vast sea that is crystal clear. And immediately before the throne he has described the Holy Spirit who is pictured as a blazing torch ready to go into battle as a consuming fire. And emanating from the throne, he says, are "flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder" symbolizing the judgment that is about to proceed from the triune godhead. And in the innermost circle in and around the throne he has described

⁵ Revelation 5:1-14.

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four amazing angels that are ever vigilant to do God's bidding. Then seated around the throne are 24 elders on 24 thrones representing the glorified, raptured Church, and together with the four angels they offer praise to the triune God.

But now the one who is revealing all of this to John, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose voice has been described as like "the sound of a trumpet," now he is about to become visible, the second member of the triune godhead. So with that in mind join me as we enter into the celestial court together and examine, number one, the *seven-sealed scroll*.

Notice verse one. "And 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."⁶ The word "book" here translates the Greek word *biblion* (bib-lee'-on) and that refers to a papyrus scroll made of animal skins. And it is rolled together as indicated in the phrase "written inside and on the back."⁷ This was not a book as we would think of it. The papyrus codices or books did not exist until late in the first century and probably more so sometime in the second century AD. So this was a scroll, we are told, therefore a long sheet of papyrus that would have been rolled from both ends meeting in the center, two cylinders coming together if you understand what I am trying to articulate.

You might ask the question, "How long would that have been?" Well, it would have been of considerable length. We don't know for sure. We know that the scroll of the book of Romans was about 11 1/2 feet and that of Philemon was about a foot. So you can kind of get a feel as to the length of the scroll. And we are also told here that visible from the longitudinal side of the cylinders are seven seals dividing its inner portions.

Ezekiel saw the same scroll in the hand of God, only when he saw it, it was spread out and given directly to him. We read of this in Ezekiel chapter two beginning in verse nine. He says:

Then I looked, behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in it. When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back; and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe.⁸

Now, this might seem foreign to us, but seven sealed scrolls were common in John's day in the first century. It was characteristic of very important documents, especially contracts. Robert Thomas has some very helpful insight in this regard. He says, and I quote, "This kind of contract was well known all over the Middle East in ancient times and was used by the Romans from the time of Nero on. The full contract would be written on the inner pages and sealed with seven seals. Then the content of the contract would be described briefly on the inside. All kinds of transactions were consummated this way including marriage contracts, rental and lease agreements, release of slaves, contract bills and bonds. Support also comes from Hebrew practices. The Hebrew document most closely resembling this scroll was a title deed that was folded and signed

⁶ Revelation 5:1.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ezekiel 2:9-10.

requiring at least three witnesses. A portion of text would be written, folded over and sealed with a different witness signing at each fold. A larger number of witnesses meant that more importance was assigned to the document,” end quote.

Obviously, this contract, this particular scroll is of infinite importance given the number of witnesses for the transaction as we read earlier in verse 11. They are myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands. Now, beloved, you must understand that within this scroll is not so much just the title deed of the earth, even though it would include that in its essence, but more specifically what is contained within are the judgments of God that he has decreed to consummate his plan to redeem his people and to restore his kingdom.

John continues his description in verse two. “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?’”⁹ A strong angel here denotes a deafening proclamation that could be heard throughout the universe. And because this is a present tense participle the word “proclaiming” indicates that he is repeatedly, continuously making this proclamation, calling for someone to step forward. But no one responds indicating that no one is worthy, no one is qualified.

Verse three. “And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.”¹⁰ How astounding. No one in all creation has the proper credentials to look upon the contents of the scroll and carry out its stated decrees. So, verse four John says, “I began to weep greatly.”¹¹ The language here indicates that this is a loud wailing of unrestrained grief. Emotion just pours forth from his soul. In fact, this is the only occasion where we read of tears in heaven.

Now, why such intense sorrow? Well, the answer goes way beyond disappointment because he wasn’t going to be able to learn what the contents of the scroll might be. No, dear friends, you must understand, these were not the tears of deprived curiosity; these were the tears of disappointed hope.

You see, he obviously knew from Ezekiel’s prophecies, as well as others, that this was the scroll that Ezekiel said was of “lamentations, mourning and woe.”¹² He understood that. And he also understood back in Ezekiel’s vision, in Ezekiel chapter three, you might recall, that God commanded Ezekiel to “eat the scroll,” the idea of internalizing the message of judgment upon Israel.

And the text says, “Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.”¹³ The idea that this is the Word of God, so naturally it is sweet. It upholds his holiness. It vindicates his glory. Then Ezekiel said, “Then He said to me, ‘Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.’”¹⁴ Then later on we read that he spoke to them and he

⁹ Revelation 5:2.

¹⁰ Revelation 5:3.

¹¹ Revelation 5:4.

¹² See Ezekiel 2:10.

¹³ Ezekiel 3:3.

¹⁴ Ezekiel 3:4.

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told them the things that God had given him. And God said, “I want you to do this whether they listen or not,” thus says the Lord God.¹⁵ John remembered all of this. So he knew this was the scroll of judgment that would come upon Israel, judgment that would fall upon her in the near future as well as the far.

And in chapters 34 through 48 of Ezekiel we read how that God gives to Ezekiel the promises of Israel’s restoration and regathering back into their land. In those chapters we read of the promise of a true shepherd that is going come, the punishment of the nations that have sought to exterminate them. We read of the removal of all of Israel’s enemies from their land and the reinstatement of true worship in Israel in the millennial temple. It is an amazing description even of the redistribution of the land in Israel divided right down to the very portions of land that each tribe will receive.

Of course John wailed in grief! To think that all of his hopes of a redeemed Israel would be dashed was more than he could bear. It was incomprehensible for him to think that the prophecies, for example, of the pre-kingdom judgments that were given in Daniel’s 70th week, and by all of the other Old Testament prophets, would not be executed. Because without those judgments being executed there would be no *judgment* and, therefore, no *repentance*. And without *repentance* there would be no *reconciliation* to their Savior, to their Messiah, to their king. And without *reconciliation* there would be no *restoration* to the land of promise and ultimately no *eternal heavenly kingdom*.

Dear friends, can you imagine being 90 years old. You have served the Lord virtually all of your life and you are rotting on a little Roman island, a penal colony. You are doing hard labor, and most of the people that you love have been martyred for their faith. And you are longing for God to do something. And then suddenly you are taken into the presence of God and you are exhilarated with hope and you know that now all of this is finally going to come to fruition. And then you discover that no one is worthy to open the scroll? Inconceivable. Beloved, John’s anguish of soul was inexpressible. But it was also premature.

Notice verse five. “And one of the elders said to me...”¹⁶ May I remind you? I believe this refers to one of the representatives of the glorified Gentile Church—that would be us—that temporarily displaced Israel, John’s beloved kinsmen. One of these elders said to him, “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.”¹⁷

What an incredible statement. “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah.”¹⁸ What does that refer to? Well, that was drawn from Genesis chapter 49 verses 8 through 12 where the Messiah king is pictured there as a lion that will come from the tribe of Judah, a lineage that we saw later on flow through the Davidic and Solomonic dynasties. And ultimately one who resembles the *king of the jungle*, powerful and

¹⁵ See Ezekiel 3:11.

¹⁶ Revelation 5:5.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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intelligent and majestic and fierce, this Lion from the tribe of Judah would emerge. And, of course, he is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, the genealogies of both Matthew one and Luke three validate that Jesus of Nazareth was, indeed, from this royal line, a fact that even in those days the Jews did not dispute.

But he is also “the Root of David.” This is another messianic title drawn from Isaiah chapter 11 and verse 1. There we read, “Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.”¹⁹ And in verse four the prophet goes on and says, “But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.”²⁰ And in verse 10 we read, “Then it will come about in that day that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.”²¹

Beloved, please grasp what is happening here. A representative of the glorified church is comforting this beloved Jewish apostle, assuring him of the promises of the Word of God. I think especially of those that he would have been very familiar with in Romans chapter 11, that his unbelieving, obstinate Jewish kinsmen, that were once broken off so that the wild olive branch of the Gentiles could be grafted into the root of blessing, that that branch that was broken off of his people will some day be grafted in once again.

The converted rabbi, the apostle Paul told the Gentiles this in Romans 11 verse 25, “For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation.”²² Now here is the mystery. “That a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.”²³ “Until” is a term that means a specific point in time. In other words, there will be a partial hardening of Israel that will continue until the complete number of elect Gentiles has come to salvation. That is what we are awaiting to this day.

And then Paul went on to say:

And thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB. AND THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.’”²⁴

Again, “WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”²⁵

And in verse 28 we read, “from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers.”²⁶ Who are the fathers? Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to whom were

¹⁹ Isaiah 11:1.

²⁰ Isaiah 11:4.

²¹ Isaiah 11:10.

²² Romans 11:25.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Romans 11:26-27.

²⁵ Romans 11:27.

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given the Abrahamic covenant, the covenant of God that he would some day redeem his people and restore a kingdom, a covenant that is unilateral, that is unconditional, that is irreversible.

From the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers; for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.²⁷

In other words, God's sovereign election is unconditional for his covenant people Israel, even as it has been unconditional for us in the Gentile Church. So the elders say to him in verse five, "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."²⁸ In other words, "John, calm down, brother. Calm down. God is still on the throne. All of his promises are still in place."

And here the scene shifts from *the seven sealed scroll* to *the Lion of Judah*, number two. And we have an amazing description here of the Lord. In verse six we read, "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain."²⁹ You know, after the word "elders" you would expect him to say, "A Lion, majestic and fierce and mighty." But he says, "A Lamb." What a paradox. Suddenly there in the middle of these magnificent, angelic creatures and the 24 elders appears a Lamb? And we see here that it is *standing*, denoting that it is alive. It is not dead. But, it says, "As if slain."³⁰ In other words, it is bloody. It is horribly wounded. It is disfigured. What a ghastly sight. How utterly incongruent, a picture drawn, of course, from the sacrificial Passover Lamb. Again, what a contrast to the expected Lion depicting ultimate majesty and power.

Ah, but, dear friends, the Lamb standing as slain depicts the ultimate sacrifice and love that raises majesty and power to a whole new level. Ask yourself: Is Christ more or less glorified because of the cross? Obviously *more*. But notice also in verse six, he says that he has, "seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth."³¹

Now, as we understand the symbolism here through other passages of the Word of God we learn that *horns* often depict in the Old Testament, strength and power, especially as they relate to a king. So this is a Hebrew metaphor that we need to understand. But not only does he have horns, he has got seven of them and, of course, seven is the number of perfection, the number of completion. So the Lamb here with seven horns symbolizes the perfect and complete strength and power and dignity of the Lamb who is ultimately the warrior king.

²⁶ See Romans 11:28.

²⁷ Romans 11:28-29.

²⁸ Revelation 5:5.

²⁹ Revelation 5:6.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

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And he has seven eyes. That is symbolic of perfect and complete omniscience according to Zechariah 3:9 and Zechariah four verse 10. I am reminded, even of 2 Chronicles 16:9 where we read that the eyes of the Lord look to and fro throughout all of the world that he might see those whose hearts are completely his.³²

And then John adds that these seven eyes on the Lamb are also representative of “the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.”³³ This carries with it the idea that the Holy Spirit will proceed from Christ as an agent of divine judgment and deliverance. So the symbolism here is the scene of the triune godhead preparing for war all centering around a Lamb that was slain.

Now, beloved, make no mistake, the Lord Jesus Christ is here depicted in his humiliation only to demonstrate his worthiness to take the scroll, to open up its seals and carry out its judgments where on the cross he conquered Satan, he conquered sin, he conquered death. In fact, later, during the tribulation judgments people will say to the mountains and to the rocks, according to chapter six and verse 16:

Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne,
and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come;
and who is able to stand?³⁴

And we see the prelude to this fury in verse seven. “And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”³⁵

I believe, dear friends, an amazing metamorphosis occurs here in this scene. The bloodied Lamb with the seven horns and the seven eyes morphs into the human form of his resurrected glory where he is seen seated at the right hand of the Father. Suddenly, I believe, this is what John is seeing. In fact, the apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 1 verse 20, that God raised him from the dead. Raised who? The Lamb that was slain.

[God] raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.³⁶

So now what we have is the mighty victor who secured our redemption turns and he takes the scroll from the Father’s right hand. And in so doing the Father symbolically authorizes the Son to enact the judgments therein. This is a concept that helps us understand the very first verse of the apocalypse where we read, “The Revelation of Jesus

³² See 2 Chronicles 16:9.

³³ Revelation 5:6.

³⁴ Revelation 6:16-17.

³⁵ Revelation 5:7.

³⁶ Ephesians 1:20-22.

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Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must shortly take place.”³⁷

Beloved, make no mistake. We no longer see the Lord Jesus Christ in Bethlehem’s manger. We no longer see him sweating great drops of blood in Gethsemane’s garden. We no longer see him as a man of sorrows acquainted with grief,³⁸ nor is he hanging on that accursed tree enduring the Father’s wrath in our stead. Now we see the King of kings and the Lord of lords prepare himself for battle along with the consuming power of the Holy Spirit who will be sent into all the earth to fulfill the will of the Father which is ultimately to consummate his plan of redemption that was decreed in eternity past to redeem the people and restore the kingdom.

So now the scroll of doom is in the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whose name has been used for centuries in vain, the one whose deity has been mocked, the one whose death has been disregarded, the one whose resurrection has been denied, whose Word has been scorned, and whose return has been ridiculed over and over again even to this day. But in this scene, dear friends, we witness an incredible transaction that will affect the course of human history in ways that no one could possibly fathom. And all of that is about to transpire.

Daniel saw the same scene in Daniel seven and verse 13. And here is what we are told.

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. 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.³⁹

And, oh, child of God, the implications of this transaction cannot be overstated. You see, it is this scroll of divine judgment that will ultimately redeem all of God’s creation from the curse, the curse that God placed on it in the garden, one that remains unabated to this day. And all we have to do is look around and we can see sin’s corruption. It is in every sector of our existence.

We watch the world in which we live moving inexorably towards a time of chaos and catastrophic end and ultimately the consummation of redemptive history where God will finally redeem his people and restore his kingdom. We can praise God for the Lamb who is worthy to take the seals. One day, dear friends, he is going to break those seals and that vengeance will begin and he will usher in that glorious kingdom, and all Israel will be saved, the curse will be reversed and the Church will rule and reign in the splendors of millennial glory. And because of these incredible truths that John now witnesses and has

³⁷ Revelation 1:1.

³⁸ See Isaiah 53:3.

³⁹ Daniel 7:13-14.

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written down and the Spirit of God has now revealed to the saints, because of this the celestial court erupts in *praise to the worthy Lamb*, number three.

We see this in verse eight. “And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”⁴⁰

The Greek grammar here would help us understand that only the 24 elders held the *harps* and the *golden bowls of incense*, not the living creatures. *Harps* throughout the Word of God are always associated with joy and gladness and praise and worship to God. And in the Old Testament *golden bowls full of incense* were really what we would call a saucer. Sometimes it would be translated “vessels.” And these vessels, these saucers were used by the high priests to offer incense before the altar in the tabernacle and later in the temple. And here we see that the incense symbolizes the prayers of the saints. What prayers? Why the prayers that we have all prayed for centuries since Christ has ascended back into heaven, the prayers that he would some day come in all of his glory.

Verse nine. “And they sang a new song.”⁴¹ A new song. This is drawn from Isaiah chapter 42 verses nine and 10. You must understand that while this is a song of redemption, it is more than that because this is a song that has never before been sung. This is a song, according to Isaiah 42:9-10 of *new things*, one that matches the new conditions of millennial glory, of all of the splendors of that new day, a new song that describes God’s earthly kingdom in ways that causes everything in the past to pale into utter insignificance. This is the new song that they sing.

And they are saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”⁴² “Every tribe, tongue, people and nation” is an idiom that is used frequently in Revelation to describe *people the world over*. And haven’t we seen that? In fact, we have got people in this room from the world over that God has drawn to himself. And I love the word “purchase.” This is a word that always stirs my soul to the very pinnacle of praise. It is the idea of *emancipation*. It is the idea of *redemption*. That is what it means, to *redeem*. It is a powerful New Testament word used to picture a slave that is being purchased from a slave auction and being set free.

Indeed, Christ Jesus has paid the penalty for your sins and for mine. He has satisfied the just wrath of God. And because of that we have been set free from the power of sin. And someday we will be set free from the very presence of it.

In verse 10 they continue. “And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”⁴³ Now currently we, as believers, are identified

⁴⁰ Revelation 5:8.

⁴¹ Revelation 5:9.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Revelation 5:10.

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as a royal priesthood,⁴⁴ 1 Peter 2:5. But our abilities to serve as priests will remain very limited until the millennial kingdom and then we will have full and immediate access into the presence of God as we come and we serve the Lord Jesus Christ, a time when the Word of God tells us we will reign with him in his kingdom as priests.⁴⁵

And as the sound of this celestial oratorio is heard around the universe we see that the whole of heaven's host comes rushing to the scene to join in the song. Verse 11. "And 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."⁴⁶ The Greek language would indicate here that this is a number that cannot be counted. Verse 12. "[They were] 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.'"⁴⁷

Then, finally, this magnificent doxology crescendos to a glorious climax where every intelligent creature in the universe is given voice to sing in verse 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:

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." And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.⁴⁸

When I think of this scene, especially with the four living creatures that keep on saying, "Amen," I have in my mind's eye a great oratorio with a magnificent orchestra and the living creatures here are playing *tympanis of amens*.

Do you know what a tympani is? Those two gigantic kettle drums with that magnificent sound that makes all of the walls of an orchestra hall shake. Can you imagine eight of these kettle drums being played, so to speak, with amens? *Let it be done. Let it be done. Let it be done*, punctuating the glorious new song of redemption.

Now John understands why the 24 elders told him, "Stop weeping, stop weeping."⁴⁹ The Lamb who is the Lion is the one who is worthy to enact the judgments of the scrolls, that will bring to fruition all the kingdom promises he has longed for. And these pre-kingdom judgments will now become the focus of chapters 6 through 19.

⁴⁴ See 1 Peter 2:5.

⁴⁵ See Revelation 20:6.

⁴⁶ Revelation 5:11.

⁴⁷ Revelation 5:12.

⁴⁸ Revelation 5:13-14.

⁴⁹ Revelation 5:5.

Revelation 5

Beloved, please understand the significance of what we have here before us and the origin of what is about to be revealed in these pre-kingdom judgments. Understand that even as the 12 acts of judgment against Pharaoh back in the Old Testament, even as those acts of judgment increased in *frequency* and *severity*, so, too, will the seal, trumpet and bowl judgments occur in like manner. They will increase in frequency and severity and we will see them pause for an opportunity for repentance. But, like the plagues against Egypt, never producing the fruit of repentant faith.

Understand that even as Pharaoh and his armies were defeated, so, too, will the antichrist and his armies be defeated at Armageddon. And, once again, Jehovah will deliver Israel.

Even as "Israel believed the Lord and his servant Moses" according to Exodus 14:31, even as they believed the Lord and Moses after their supernatural deliverance, and the fear of God spread to all of the surrounding Gentile nations, likewise Israel will one day believe in their deliverer, the Messiah King. And, beloved, once again the Gentile nations will tremble. And even as Moses and the children of Israel once sung that paean of deliverance as they stood in amazement at the shore of the Red Sea in Exodus 15, so, too, a day is coming when yet another victory song will be sung.

So, again, "John, no need to wail and despair. The Lamb is worthy. The Lion has overcome." And to prove it, I love what God did. He gave him a concert. He gave him a concert.

Well, as we come to a close this morning I want to read you a quote from Charles Spurgeon that described this scene in his own inimitable way. Here is what he said. "Music," quote, "hath charms... There is a potency in harmony; there is a magic power in melody, which either melts the soul to pity, or lifts it up to joy unspeakable.... When the saints of God, in full chorus, "chaunt the solemn lay," and when I hear sweet syllables fall from their lips, keeping measure and time, then I feel elevated; and, forgetting for a time everything terrestrial, I soar aloft towards heaven. If such be the sweetness of the music of the saints below, where there is much of discord and sin to mar the harmony, how sweet must it be to sing above, with cherubim and seraphim. Oh, what songs must those be which the Eternal ever hears upon his throne! What seraphic sonnets must those be which are thrilled from the lips of pure immortals, untainted by a sin, unmingled with a groan: where they warble ever hymns of joy and gladness, never intermingled with one sigh, or groan, or worldly care. Happy songsters!" And then he goes on to say, "When shall I join this chorus? There is one of your hymns that runs:

Hark! how they sing before the throne!

....and I have sometimes thought I could 'hark! how they sing before the throne.' I have imagined that I could hear the full burst of the swell of the chorus, when it pealed from heaven like mighty thunders, and the sound of many waters, and have almost heard those full-toned strains, when the harpers harped with their harps before the throne of God; alas, it was but imagination. We cannot hear it now; these ears are not fitted for such

The Worthy Lamb

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Revelation 5

music; these souls could not be contained in the body, if we were once to hear some stray note from the harps of angels.”

And then he said this. “We must wait till we get up yonder. Then, purified, like silver seven times, from the defilement of earth, washed in our Saviour's precious blood, sanctified by the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit—

We shall, unblemished and complete,
Appear before our Father's throne,
With joys divinely great.
Then loudest of the crowd we'll sing,
Whilst heaven's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sovereign grace.”

End quote.

Oh, dear friend, I hope that you have bowed before the worthy Lamb in repentant faith, because he is your only hope of salvation. And, dear Christian, I would challenge you this morning to keep this glorious scene center stage in your mind, lest you, like the beloved apostle be overcome with grief on some sad day when all seems lost.

May I encourage you with these closing thoughts?

What sorrow doth engulf the soul of those who have been redeemed?
Why mourn when from sin's dreadful bonds you have been fully freed?
Why wail in doleful tears of grief when sin doth no more reign,
When Satan's sway is doomed to end and death has lost its sting?

Rejoice, ye saints, shout and sing,
The victory has been won.
The worthy Lamb has shed his blood,
The Lion overcome.

With certain hope let hearts give praise,
And with the angel's sing.
A new song of “Thy kingdom come,”
Await your coming king.

Let's pray together.

Father, as we reflect upon the glorious promises found in this text, our souls are elevated to new heights of praise and wonder and anticipation. Will you take what we have learned today and apply it to our hearts in ways that will ultimately conform us evermore into the image of our beloved Savior and our coming King the Lord Jesus Christ. For it is in his name that I pray. Amen.

Transcript Explanation: Each transcript is a rough approximation of the message preached and may occasionally misstate certain portions of the sermon and even misspell certain words. It should in no way be considered an edited document ready for print. Moreover, as in any transcription of the spoken word, the full intention and passion of the speaker cannot be fully captured and will in no way reflect the same style of a written document.

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