

## **The Seven-Sealed Scroll And The Lamb**

Revelation 5:1-14

**Rev. 5:1** 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. 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 And 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 He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. 8 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. 9 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.

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

**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, 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.

**Intro:** You will recall from our study last Sunday that chapters 4 and 5 serve as a prologue or introduction to the third major division of the Book of Revelation, chapters 4–22. Beginning in chapter 6 and extending through chapter 18, John records events that will take place during the final seven years of human history, a future period commonly referred to as the Great Tribulation. This extended section unfolds the ominous judgments that God will pour out upon this Christ-rejecting world. But before the judgments commence, John is transported spiritually to heaven in chapter 4, where he is given a spectacular vision of God on His throne, surrounded by 4 angelic beings and 24 elders representing the redeemed church of Jesus Christ. Chapter 5 continues the vision by focusing attention on the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, who alone is worthy to receive and open a seven-sealed scroll. The scroll describes a three-fold series of seven-fold judgments that Christ will release upon the earth during the seven year Tribulation period.

**Movie clip: *Glory to the Lamb***

### **III. The Revelation Of Future Events: “*The Things Which Shall Take Place After These Things*” (Revelation 4–22)**

A. John’s vision of the heavenly throne (Rev. 4:1-11)

B. John’s vision of the seven-sealed scroll and the Lamb (Rev. 5:1-14)

1. The seven-sealed scroll (v. 1)

Chapter 5 is actually a continuation of the vision John received of God on His glorious throne. Look at chapter 5, verse 1,

1 **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.

John next sees a seven-sealed scroll in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, described in chapter 4 as God the Father. The “right hand” depicts God’s authority and power to carry out all that is

recorded on the scroll. The scroll contained writing both inside and outside, depicting the fullness of God's purposes. The scroll was rolled up, and sealed with seven seals. The use of a seven-fold seal was in keeping with the customs of the day. Roman law required a will to be sealed seven times as illustrated in the wills left by Caesar's Augustus and Vespasian.

This scroll that John saw is typically depicted as being rolled up with seven seals affixed to the outer edge in a continuous line. However, this is not an accurate portrayal of how scrolls were typically sealed. Scholars tell us that scrolls would typically contain a column of information, which would be rolled up and sealed, and then another column would be recorded, rolled up and sealed, and so on, until the correspondence was completed. A final seal would be placed on the outer edge of the finished, rolled up scroll. This procedure explains how a seal would be broken, and a portion read, before breaking another seal and reading the next column.

**Contents of the scroll**—While we are not told the contents of the scroll here, when Christ breaks the first seal in chapter 6, we learn that this seven-sealed scroll contains the judgments that Christ is going to pour out upon the earth. These judgments are necessary to bring rebellious man to his knees, defeat Satan's kingdom, restore the earth under the visible authority of God, and to reestablish man as preeminent over creation, as God had originally intended before the fall orchestrated by Satan (Gen. 1:26-28).

Dr. David Jeremiah explains: "As we look at chapter 6, we see the seals begin to be opened, and we see the judgments of God poured out upon the earth. These [judgments] indicate the beginning of the [seven year] Tribulation period on earth. The number seven is mentioned three times during the Tribulation period, referring first to seven seals, then to seven trumpets, and finally to seven bowls or vials. These are related to each other as in a telescope, with the seven trumpets being contained within the seven seals and the seven bowls being contained within the seventh trumpet. The [seven] seals present all the judgments for the entire Book of Revelation, from the beginning to end of the Tribulation period. As the scroll is unrolled the seals are broken one by one, slowly revealing what is going to happen." (*Escape the Coming Night*, vol. 2, 22).

**What the scroll represents**—most scholars are of the opinion that the scroll represents the “Title deed to the earth.” Dr. Ryrie explains: The scroll “contains the story of man’s loosing his lordship over creation, and the regaining of that authority by the [God-] Man Christ Jesus. The book might be titled the ‘Book of Redemption’ since it contains the story of Redemption to its final consummation, not only in relation to man but also to the world. Satan has usurped what God originally gave to man in Adam, and Christ the Redeemer reclaimed cursed man and the cursed earth.” (*Revelation*, 40).

## 2. The strong angel’s question: “Who is worthy?” (vv. 2-5)

2 John next sees a strong angel, who cries out with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?”

While this mighty angel is not identified, many believe it is Gabriel. He is the one, you recall, who communicated God’s Word to Daniel, and told him to conceal and to seal up his book” (Dan. 12:4).

According to verse 3 “No one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the scroll, or to look into it.”

An exhaustive search was made throughout the universe, but no qualified person could be found to open the scroll, or to look into it.

This caused John to weep uncontrollably, v. 4

4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it.

John’s great sorrow and sobbing was due to the fact that no qualified person could be found in all the universe, who could rescue mankind from his fallen and cursed condition.

5 One of the elders commands John to stop weeping, and assures him that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, was able to open the scroll, v. 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.”

Two titles are given of the One who was qualified to open the scroll and to break its seals, and both are titles for Israel's Messiah.

(1) The Lion from the Tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-12)

The first title, "The Lion from the Tribe of Judah," comes from Genesis 49:8-12. Prior to his death, Jacob assembled his 12 sons around his bed and pronounced a blessing upon each of them. When he came to Judah, he predicted that Messiah, the Ruler of Israel and all the earth, would come forth from his descendants, from the royal tribe of Judah.

(2) The Root of David (Isaiah 11:1, 10)

Not only was Messiah from the royal tribe of Judah, He was also from the "root of David." Isaiah predicted in the eleventh chapter and first verse, that the future Ruler of Israel, Messiah, would come forth from the root or stem of David's father Jesse. King David was from the tribe of Judah, as was his greater Son, Jesus Christ. One of Christ's titles during His ministry on earth was "Son of David."

In His incarnation, the taking on of His humanity, Jesus had His roots in David, who was from the royal tribe of Judah. But notice here that Jesus Christ is referred to "as the Root of David," which signifies that David came forth from Him. The angel emphasized Jesus deity by placing Him before David. "In His humanity Jesus was from David, but in His Deity He was before David" (Dr. David Jeremiah, *Escape the Coming Night*, vol. 2, 23).

The mighty angel assures John that the Messiah, The Lion from the Tribe of Judah and root of King David, was both qualified and able to break the seven seals and open the scroll.

John next sees and describes a Lamb who appeared to have been slain, yet the Lamb was standing at the center of the throne vv. 6-7

3. The Lamb who was slain (vv. 6-7)

**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.

John next sees the Lion from the Tribe of Judah, descendant of David, presented as the Lamb of God who had been slain. The “Lamb” is a reference to Jesus Christ, and is used 28 times in the Book of Revelation. Whereas the title “Lamb of God” refers to Christ’s first coming and His death for the sins of mankind (John 1:29); the “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” refers to Christ’s second coming as the sovereign Warrior King.

John sees the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne. We would not expect to see a slain Lamb standing in the midst of God’s throne. He had been slain, but now He stands ready to release God’s judgment on this Christ-rejecting world.

The Lamb is further described as “having seven horns and seven eyes, which are described as referring to the seven Spirits of God.”

***The seven horns*** symbolize Christ’s omnipotent and absolute power. The number seven, referring to perfection and fulness, shows that Christ will be victorious over all His enemies, and will establish His Kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth.

***The seven eyes*** symbolize Christ’s omniscience, wisdom and insight. Again, “seven” refers to the totality and perfection of His knowledge and insight. As Paul says in Colossians 2:3, “In Him (Jesus Christ), are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

While the Lamb is described as possessing “seven horns and seven eyes,” this is also a reference to the Holy Spirit of God who likewise knows all and sees all. Christ is the One who sent His Holy Spirit as a Helper to indwell His followers forever (John 14:16). Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:13 and 14 that “After listening to the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him (Jesus Christ) with the Holy Spirit of promise 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.” In addition, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts men of sin, righteousness, and coming judgment (John 16:8).

7 John next watches as the Lamb, who alone is worthy, took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (Dan. 7:9, 13-14).

What a beautiful scene. The only One in all of creation that is qualified to break the seals and open the scroll, is now seen moving towards God's throne to take the scroll out of His Father's right hand. With the taking of the seven-sealed scroll, action is now ready to begin.

This scene is reminiscent of Daniel's vision in **Daniel 7:13-14** of One like a Son of Man (Jesus Christ) who comes up to the Ancient of Days who gives Him an eternal kingdom.

**Dan. 7:13-14**—"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall never be destroyed."

Dr. Walvoord, commenting on Christ's future Kingdom, says this:

"In that future day complete authority over the world will be realized by Christ, an authority which He will exercise both in the judgments which precede His second coming and in His reign for one thousand years which will follow His second advent" (*Revelation*, 116).

Christ's reception of the seven-sealed scroll from His Father leads to a tremendous outpouring of worship, vv. 8-14

#### 4. The worship of the Lamb (vv. 8-14)

8 And when He had taken the scroll, 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.

In chapter 4 God was worshipped as the sovereign, majestic, and glorious Creator, here the central focus of worship is God's Son, Jesus Christ, the Lamb who was slain for the sins of the world.

When Christ took the scroll from the right hand of His Father, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down prostrate before the Lamb in worship and adoration. Each of the 24 elders had a harp and a golden bowl full of incense in their hands. The golden bowls of incense are described as the prayers of the saints.

Notice that none of your prayers escape God's attention. In fact, He rejoices in the prayers of His people. Why? Because when we pray, we are demonstrating our dependence upon Him, and our faith that He will answer us.

Dr. David Jeremiah is of the opinion that "the prayers of the saints" referred to here in Revelation 5:8 is possibly the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples in Matthew 6:10 "Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This will certainly be fulfilled when Jesus Christ, the King of glory takes possession of the kingdoms of this world, and established His Kingdom on earth (*Escape the Coming Night*, 25).

The four living beings and the 24 elders, representing the redeemed of the church age, proceed to sing a new song of worship and praise to the Lamb in verses 9 and 10 saying,

**9** "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. **10** "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

The Lamb is worthy of praise because He was slain for the sins of the world, and did purchase for God with His own blood, men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And He has made them, those He has redeemed, to be a kingdom and priest for service to God, and they will reign with Christ in His Kingdom on this earth.

John next sees and hears an innumerable host of angels join the four



living creatures and the elders in ascribing a seven-fold doxology of praise to the Lamb in verses 11 and 12,

**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, 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.”

The innumerable host of angels, the 4 living beings and the 24 elders are joined in verse 13 by every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them in ascribing praise to God and to the Lamb.

**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.”

Isn't that great? Every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them are going to worship and ascribe praise to God the Father and the Lamb.

**14** And the four living creatures respond to this symphony of adoration by continually crying out, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

Conclusion:

The emphasis in this fifth chapter is clearly in recognizing the worthiness of the Lamb, who alone is worthy to take the scroll from His Father, open its seals, and pour out its judgments. But a further emphasis is devoted to the unified express-ion of worship to God the Father and to the Lamb. Dr. Pentecost contends that “These two chapters reveal the indescribable glory and infinite majesty of the Godhead in heaven. The following chapters [6-18] reveal the sovereign power of God expressed in judgment on a wicked world sunk in unprecedented depths of sin and blasphemy. Though believers today do not have the privilege of sharing John’s vision . . . every believer can take the word pictures of Scripture [as recorded] here and anticipate the glory and the wonder

of the heavenly scene that he will someday see with his own eyes.”  
 (“Revelation,” in *BKC*, 946)

Obviously, God wants our worship just like this today. This passage serves as a beautiful example of what our worship and service for the Lord Jesus Christ should always be like.

Perhaps you’re here this morning and you have never accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior from sin and death. As I close in prayer, I invite you to speak to God in the quietness of your own heart, and invite Christ to come in to your heart and life, and He will.

Closing prayer:

**Lord’s Supper: 1 Cor. 11:23-26**

**Song for Lord’s Supper: Behold the Lamb**