

Revelation 5

In chapter 4, we experienced the worship of God the Father. In chapter 5 we will experience the worship of Jesus Christ. These two chapters provide us a keyhole glimpse of what will be going on in heaven before God pours out His judgments on the earth (Revelation chapters 6-18).¹

What was in the right hand of the One on the throne (v. 1)? A scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. **What was the significance of being in His right hand?** God's "right hand" refers to His authority to translate the contents of this scroll into action. The right hand signifies possession, power, control, and honor.

What was the significance of it being written "on both sides" (v. 1)? This meant that this scroll was unusual. It wasn't common practice to write on both sides of the scroll. This means that whatever information was on this scroll, there was a lot of it—was almost more than the scroll can contain.

What did the scroll contain? The revelation of judgments that will fall upon the earth before Jesus sets up His Kingdom. The best solution is to see the scroll as "God's will," his final settlement of the affairs of the universe; His detailed plans and purposes for subduing the enemies of Christ and establishing His reign upon the earth. However, the emphasis is not on the *content* of the scroll, but on its *seals* and the *One* who is worthy to take it.

Why could it not be read (v. 1)? Because it could not be opened. It was sealed with seven seals. Someone, probably God, had "sealed" it with "seven seals," suggesting that while this plan has been settled in the eternal counsels of God—it has been concealed. Roman law required that people seal their wills "seven" times because they were very important documents. The perfect number (i.e., seven) of seals may also hint at the absolute holiness of the scroll.²

What problem was raised by a mighty angel (v. 2)? There was no one to be found who was worthy to break the seals and open the scroll. Any prophet could have *revealed* this information but it took someone with adequate power to *execute* the events foretold, as well as to reveal and bring them to pass.³

Who responded at first to the call (v. 3)? No one. **How did this affect John?** He wept and wept. He was emotionally crushed. **Why?** If the scroll could not be opened, the wicked would go unpunished and the righteous would not be vindicated; the kingdom would be delayed in coming; the consummation of history would now be indefinitely postponed.

What information did one of the elders give John (v. 5)? There is One who is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals. **Who was it?** Jesus Christ, the Lion of Judah. As God's ultimate Anointed One, Jesus alone possessed the authority necessary for this task. He triumphed over Satan, sin, and death, all of God's enemies, so He alone qualified to implement God's purposes for the future that this scroll revealed.⁴

When John looked what did He see (v. 6). Expecting to see a kingly Lion, he saw a Lamb. The "Lamb" is a symbol of Jesus Christ at His first advent, meek and submissive to a sacrificial death as our Substitute—bearing away the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:7; John 1:36; 21:15). The Lion (v. 5) is a symbol of Him at His second advent, powerful and aggressively judging the world in righteousness (Psalms 2),⁵ punishing His enemies. There is no more dreadful thought than to have to face the "Lion" in judgment because you have rejected the "Lamb."

What had happened to the Lamb (v. 6)? It looked as if it had been slain. It had the wounds and scars of sacrifice and death.

What did the seven horns and seven eyes represent (v. 6)? The Lamb had "seven horns," representing the fullness of His power. The "horn" is a common Old Testament symbol for power or strength... The Lamb also had "seven eyes," representing the fullness of His divine wisdom and discernment... The Lamb is omnipotent as well as omniscient.⁶ Again we see the number seven representing perfection or completeness.

Where was the Lamb standing? In the center of the throne. **What did this prove?** That He is God.

What did the Lamb do (v. 7)? He took the scroll from the one sitting on the throne.

What did that indicate? Clearly this symbolized a transfer of authority from the Father to the Son to reveal the future and to execute judgment (1:1).⁷

What happened when He did this (v. 8-9)? The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. And they sang a new song. The transfer of authority triggered an outpouring of praise and worship for the Lamb, because it signaled that Christ would begin judging.⁸

What did the elders have (v. 8)? Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense.

What did the bowls of incense represent? The prayers of the believers. These prayers are the pleadings of saints already in heaven, requesting God to make right every wrong on the earth. They are petitions offered to God to vindicate His name on the earth by pouring out His judgments upon an unbelieving world.⁹ They very well could be the prayers of the martyrs crying to God to avenge their blood.

Consider the songs they sang (vv. 9-10; 12; 13). What was the main theme of the songs? The worthiness of Jesus. They sang a new song in anticipation of the divine deliverance that was imminent.

How has he purchased men for God with his blood (v. 9)? His blood washed away the sins of the world thus “purchasing” the forgiveness of all. By the shedding of His blood, He has paid the price required by God the Father to redeem all believers. Hebrews 9:22 ...*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

How would you define “redeem?” To obtain release by the payment of a price. To purchase back; to ransom; to liberate or rescue from captivity or bondage. When someone pays the price so that a person in prison can be free.

Who is eligible to be redeemed by His blood (v. 9)? People *from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

Who then joined in the song of praise (v. 11)? Huge numbers of the angels of heaven. A second choir of worshippers joins now with the first choir—and all heaven breaks loose!

For what was the Lamb praised and worshipped (vv. 9-10, 12-13)? For His worthiness to open the seals of the scroll. **What was the Lamb worthy to receive (v. 12)?** ... *power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.*

Who then joined the chorus (vv. 13-14)? ... *every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea...* All of creation, everywhere and everything, worships the Father and the Son. The stones, the birds, the animals, and the fish finally cry out—all creation that had been groaning under the futility of the curse. They know that they are about to be set free (Romans 8:18-23).

“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb...” **This combined worship of the Father and the Lamb was a strong testimony to what (v. 13)?** The deity of Jesus. “There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Lamb is to be reckoned *with* God and *as* God” (Leon Morris).

How would you like your worship life to be affected by what chapters 4 & 5 depict?

¹ Keith Krell, *Live Like You're Leaving: Revelation*, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Revelation*, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 75

³ Keith Krell, *Live Like You're Leaving: Revelation*, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org

⁴ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Revelation*, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 76

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. p. 77

⁷ Keith Krell, *Live Like You're Leaving: Revelation*, Copyright ©2003, Bible.org

⁸ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Revelation*, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 78

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