

Revelation 5

New International Version (NIV)

The Scroll and the Lamb

5:1 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.

I. Context

- A. John is in the throne room of God.
 - 1. It sits on the atmosphere overlooking the earth.
 - 2. In the center is God on a throne surrounded by a rainbow
 - a) signifying His power to protect the world.
 - 3. In front of the throne is the Holy Spirit
 - a) revealed in His churches.
 - 4. Surrounding the throne is 24 elders
 - a) that represent all the people of God from all of time.
 - b) they worship God because they choose to
 - 5. On the earth under the throne are four beasts
 - a) that represent all of nature - including man
 - b) they worship God because they are forced to
- B. John notices a scroll in God's right hand
 - 1. It is protected and used by God - as was the church.
 - 2. It has writing on both sides
 - a) which means that it is completely full - nothing more could be added.
 - 3. It is sealed with seven seals
 - a) meaning it was completely and perfectly sealed.

II. Notes

- A. Isaiah 29:11 - *And the entire vision will be to you like the words sealed in a scroll. If it is handed to a reader, he will say, "I cannot read it, because it is sealed.*
- B. Ezekiel 2:9 - *Then I looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, and in it was a scroll,*
- C. Ezekiel 2:10 - *which He unrolled before me. And written on the front and back of it were words of lamentation, mourning, and woe.*
- D. Zechariah 5:1 - *Again I lifted up my eyes and saw before me a flying scroll.*
- E. [writing on both sides] there was no room for addition to that which was written therein.
- *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

5:2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"

I. Context

- A. John is in the throne room of God
 - 1. God is holding a tiny scroll in His hand.
 - 2. It is completely sealed with seven seals.
- B. Then a strong angel stepped up to give a challenge
 - 1. The challenge was to take the scroll out of God's hand and open it.
 - 2. The challenge seemed to be one of strength, so it was fitting a strong angel should give it.
 - a) It would need to be someone stronger than the strongest angel to undertake such a task.

II. Notes

- A. I saw a mighty angel
 - 1. The inquiry to be made was one of vast importance; it was to be made of all in heaven, all on the earth, and all under the earth, and hence an angel is introduced

so mighty that his voice could be heard in all those distant worlds. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

2. There were no weak angels, but possibly this angel might, in appearance to John, look as if he were stronger than others - [Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

B. Who is worthy

1. a person of greatness and worth, from whence his ability arises; as he ought to be that can engage his heart to draw nigh to God, and take a book out of his right hand - [Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible](#)

5:3 **But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.**

I. Context

A. John is in the throne room of God.

1. God is holding a sealed scroll.
2. A challenge is issued by an Angel
 - a) asking who can open this scroll.

B. No one was able to answer the challenge

1. In heaven - God's realm
 - a) not even God
 - (1) because of His holiness.
2. On earth - Man's realm
3. Under the earth - The realm of the dead
 - a) Note: Jesus could open the seal because He conquered all three realms.

II. Notes

A. The looking on the book is usually understood of the look cast on the book of one who would read the contents. If so, the thought is, none could open, still less read, the roll. It may, however, be that all who attempted to take the book were unable to face the glory in which it lay. When Christ revealed Himself to Saul he could not see for the glory of that light. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

B. The idea is, that there was no one in heaven - evidently alluding to the created beings there - who could open the volume... Among all classes of people - sages, divines, prophets, philosophers...the abodes of the dead - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

5:4 **I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.**

I. Context

A. John is in the throne room of God

1. God is holding a scroll
2. The scroll is completely sealed with seven seals.
3. A challenge is given for anyone to open the scroll
4. No-one in Heaven, earth, or under the earth is found worthy enough to open the scroll

B. John begins to weep

1. He takes this matter personally
 - a) Not even God can open this scroll
2. This is because the scroll represented John in the hands of God
 - a) God could not open the scroll because John was unclean - unholy.
 - (1) God cannot touch the unholy.
3. This would mean that John was lost - He had no place in Heaven.

II. Notes

5:5 **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."**

I. Context

A. John is in the throne room of God

1. He is weeping because he is separated from God by His sins.
2. This is represented by a small scroll
 - a) that God is holding in His hand
 - b) but that is sealed completely with seven seals
 - c) that no one can open - not even God.

B. While John weeps

1. one of the elders comforts him and directs his vision to the good news - Jesus saves.
 - a) The elder represents the church - as symbolic of God's people
 - b) Through the church we find comfort and are directed to Jesus for salvation.
2. Jesus can open the seals
 - a) because He has the right credentials
 - (1) He is the chosen one from the tribe of Judah
 - (a) the lion's cub that has grown up.
 - i) Genesis 49:9 - **Judah is a young lion--my son, you return from the prey. Like a lion he crouches and lies down; like a lioness, who dares to rouse him?**
 - (2) He is the true king
 - (a) the root of David
 - i) the foundation of the Kingdom on earth.
 - b) He has conquered
 - (1) He has completed the work of God in saving man
 - (2) by dying on the Cross and defeating death.
 - c) He can open the scroll and its seven seals
 - (1) because He is the triumphant one in Heaven - the son of God.
 - (2) because He is the triumphant one on Earth - the son of man.
 - (3) because He is the triumphant one under the earth - He conquered death.
 - d) because He is united with John in life and death.
 - (1) He can enter John and unlock the seals from the inside.
 - (a) Romans 6:5 - **For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.**

II. Notes

A. One of the elders

1. the representatives of the church, there was a propriety that they should address John in his trouble. - **Barnes' Notes on the Bible**

B. Lion of Judah

1. Genesis 49:9 - **Judah is a young lion--my son, you return from the prey. Like a lion he crouches and lies down; like a lioness, who dares to rouse him?**
2. Hebrews 7:14 - **For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, a tribe as to which Moses said nothing about priests.**
3. The lion was the ancient symbol of the tribe of Judah. - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**

C. The root of David

1. Isaiah 11:1 - **A shoot will spring up from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.**
2. Isaiah 11:10 - **On that day the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will seek Him, and His place of rest will be glorious.**
3. The Lion is also the representative of the royal house of David. "Christ cometh of the seed of David" - **Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers**

D. triumphed

1. The right to open the roll is thus made to turn, as we noticed before, not merely on the divine Sonship of our Lord, but upon His victory: - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

I. Context

A. John is in the throne room of God.

1. God is holding a scroll that represents John's life.
 - a) It is completely sealed.
 - (1) No one can open the seals because they are not worthy.
 - (2) God cannot open the seals because John is unclean and God cannot become tainted.
 2. John weeps because he cannot be connected to God
 - a) But a member of God's church (an elder) gives him the Gospel - the good news
 - (1) Jesus has been made worthy to open the seal because He has died for John.

B. John sees a lamb

1. He expected to see a lion
 - a) The Messiah did not come as Judah expected
 - (1) he came as a servant not a conqueror.
 - b) God's strength is found in His weakness
2. The Lamb had been slain
 - a) it was a sacrifice that had been offered to God.
 - b) it represented Jesus on the cross.
 - (1) This weakness is where Jesus strength to open the seals came from.
3. The Lamb is the center of attention
 - a) He is in the middle of the circle of elders (the church)
 - b) He is in the middle of the beasts (the unchurched)
4. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes
 - a) The horns represented the power of the Lamb.
 - b) The eyes represented the omniscience of the Lamb - He is aware of everything.
 - c) The horns and eyes were
 - (1) the Seven Spirits of God - the Holy Spirit as seen in His church.
 - (2) sent into all the earth - the church in every nation.
 - d) This AGAIN stresses the importance of the Church to God's plan.

II. Notes

A. Lamb

1. Isaiah 53:7 - He was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so He did not open His mouth.
2. John 1:29 - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
3. The Evangelist is told of the Lion which will open the seals: he looks, and lo, it is a Lamb! yes, a little Lamb—for the word is diminutive. There is deep significance in this. When we read of the Lion, we think of power and majesty, and we are right; all power in heaven and earth is Christ's, but it is power manifested in seeming weakness. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

B. In the middle

1. the Lamb is not on the throne, but in the middle front of it, and so apparently between the living creatures, and in the midst of the circle formed by the twenty-four elders. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

2. We are not to suppose that he was in the center of the throne itself, but he was a conspicuous object when the throne and the elders and the living beings were seen.
 - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- C. Seven horns
 1. Emblems of authority and power - for the horn is a symbol of power and dominion.
 - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- D. Seven eyes
 1. Zechariah 4:10 - *For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven eyes of the LORD, which scan the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand."*

5:7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

I. Context

- A. John is in the throne room of God.
 1. God is holding a scroll that represents John.
 - a) It is sealed completely
 - b) Only Jesus can open it
 - (1) because He died for John
 - (2) and united His life with John.
- B. God gives the scroll to Jesus

II. Notes

- A. it is self-evident that no one, not even the Lamb, can take the book if God do not give it, - [Meyer's NT Commentary](#)

5:8 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 God's people.

I. Context

- A. John is in the throne room of God.
 1. God has a scroll that represents John.
 2. The scroll is sealed with seven seals.
 3. Only Jesus can open the seals because He died for John and now shares His life.
- B. When the Lamb takes the scroll from God, all of the church and nature worship God.
 1. They hold harps and bowls of incense which were the elements of worship in the Temple.
 2. This worship includes a specific prayer for the salvation of John
 - a) showing that the church aides in the salvation of the lost through their intercessory prayer.

II. Notes

- A. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders
 1. It is not the Church alone which is interested in the revelation which will throw light on life's mysteries and the delay of the kingdom: the whole creation groaneth, waiting for the reign of righteousness; and therefore the four living beings, who represent creation, join with the elders, who represent the Church, in the adoration of the Lamb who holds the secret of life's meaning in His hand. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)
- B. The lamb
 1. John 1:29 - *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*
- C. Harp and golden bowl filled with incense.
 1. Psalm 33:2 - *Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; Sing praises to Him with a harp of ten strings.*

2. he alludeth to the worship of God under the Old Testament, where in the temple they were wont to praise God with instruments of music, and offering up of frankincense - Matthew Poole's Commentary
- D. Golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people
1. Numbers 7:62 - *one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense;*
 2. Psalm 141:2 - *May my prayer be set before You like incense, my uplifted hands like the evening offering.*

5: 9 *And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

I. Context

- A. John is in the throne room of God.
 1. Jesus takes the scroll that represents John's life
 2. He prepares to open the seven seals.
- B. All of the church and nature begins to pray and give glory to Jesus
 1. They sang a new song of the redemption of John
 2. This song states that Jesus can open the seals because He purchased the rights to John's life through His death on the cross.
 - a) and He has done the same for every person that wants to be opened to God
 - (1) no matter what their heritage.

II. Notes

- A. Psalm 33:3 - *Sing to Him a new song; play skillfully with a shout of joy.*
- B. Psalm 40:3 - *He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD.*
- C. Psalm 98:1 - *Sing to the LORD a new song, for He has done wonders; His right hand and holy arm have gained Him the victory.*
- D. Psalm 149:1 - *Hallelujah! Sing to the LORD a new song--His praise in the assembly of the godly.*
- E. Isaiah 42:10 - *Sing to the LORD a new song, His praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands, and all who dwell there.*
- F. Daniel 5:19 - *Because of the greatness that He bestowed on him, all peoples, nations, and men of every language trembled in fear before him. He killed whom he wished and kept alive whom he wished; he exalted whom he wished and humbled whom he wished.*
- G. Acts 20:28 - *Keep watch over yourselves and the entire flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.*
- H. I Corinthians 6:20 - *you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.*
- I. the song of redemption was a different song, and is one that would never have been sung there if man had not fallen, and if the Redeemer had not died. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

5:10 *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."*

I. Context

- A. Jesus has taken the scroll that represents John's life
 1. He prepares to open it.
 2. Only He can open it because He has purchased John with His life.
 3. He has purchased all of His church with His blood.
- B. The church will be a kingdom of priests that will reign on earth.
 1. A kingdom - united under the kingship of Jesus.
 2. Priests - living for Jesus

3. Reigning on Earth - because the church will be the majority of the world.

II. Notes

- A. Exodus 19:6 - *And unto Me you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you are to speak to the Israelites."*
- B. Revelation 1:6 - *who has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father--to Him be the glory and power forever and ever! Amen.*
- C. there will be such a prevalence of true religion, and the redeemed will be so much in the ascendancy, that the affairs of the nations will be in their hands. Righteous people will hold the offices; will fill places of trust and responsibility; will have a controlling voice in all that pertains to human affairs. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

5:11 *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.*

I. Context

- A. The church and Nature are singing praise to Jesus
 - 1. He has sacrificed His life and conquered death
 - a) to purchase the the people of earth
 - b) so that he can transform them into Heavenly beings
 - (1) that can connect directly with God.
- B. While they praised Jesus, all of heaven join in.
 - 1. Showing that everything - in Heaven and on Earth - is focused on the work of Jesus.
 - 2. and that the angels rejoice at the salvation of one man.

II. Notes

- A. Daniel 7:10 - *A river of fire was flowing, coming out from His presence. Thousands upon thousands attended Him, and myriads upon myriads stood before Him. The court was convened, and the books were opened.*
- B. Hebrews 12:22 - *Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to myriads of angels*
- C. Jude 1:14 - *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, also prophesied about them: "Behold, the Lord is coming with myriads of His holy ones*
- D. It is remarkable that men are represented, through the whole vision, as nearer to God than any of the angels. - [Benson Commentary](#)
- E. The design is to show that there is universal sympathy and harmony in heaven, and that all worlds will unite in ascribing honor to the Lamb of God. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)
- F. ten thousand times ten thousand - 100 million - a general term to denote either a countless number, or an exceedingly great number. We are not to suppose that it is to be taken literally. - [Barnes' Notes on the Bible](#)

5:12 *In a loud voice they were saying: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"*

I. Context

- A. All of heaven and earth are praising Jesus
 - 1. because He is able to open the seals and connect John to God.
- B. The song of praise is seven fold (power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and power)
 - 1. To emphasize the perfection and completeness of Jesus
 - a) He completely worthy
 - (1) there is no one that can be more worthy.

II. Notes

- A. John 1:29 - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- B. The doxology is seven-fold. - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

5:13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

I. Context

- A. All of heaven and earth sing praises because Jesus is worthy to save His people.
- B. With these singers, others begin to sing
 - 1. All those that live under the earth - meaning those that have died.
 - 2. All those that are on the sea - meaning those in the farthest reaches and depths of creation
 - 3. There is no one (living or dead, believer or nonbeliever) that is not praising God's name for the salvation that Jesus brings.

II. Notes

- A. I Chronicles 29:11 - Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in heaven and on earth belongs to You. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all.
- B. Philippians 2:10 - that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
- C. The third chorus: the chorus of the universe. The song of the redeemed, echoed by the hosts of angels, is now merged in the utterance of all. "Every creature which is in the heaven, and upon the earth, and beneath the earth, and upon the sea, and all the things that are in them - [Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers](#)

5:14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

I. Context

- A. All of creation and heaven — including all those that have died and those that do not believe in God — are worshipping God for the salvation He brings through His son.
- B. The song ends with
 - 1. All of nature saying "Amen" - that they agree to all that what sung
 - 2. The church bowing before God in worship.

II. Notes

- A.