

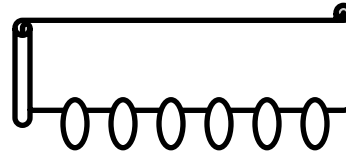
as to open the scroll and its seven seals." ⁶ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. ⁷ And He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

The key issue of Rev 5 is finding someone worthy to take the seven sealed scroll from God's hand, to break its seals and to read it (5:1-2). In previous weeks we investigated this scroll so we could understand its significance in this context. As I said then, so again, I say now, it holds information regarding the rest of the Book of Revelation. Since Adam forfeited his tenant possession of the earth to Satan, handing over this domain to him at the Fall God sent forth His only begotten Son to pay the redemption price for mankind and his tenant possession. Since He paid this price in full with His precious blood He has every right to return and take what is rightfully His. Any usurpers who refuse to leave must be evicted, by force if necessary. Thus, His purchase of the earth gives justification for the severity of the judgments released upon the whole world in Rev 6-19. These judgments are contained within the scroll deed which was made when Jesus Christ paid the purchase price on the cross. During the interval between the payment on the cross and this future day which John saw in a vision, the scroll deed has been kept safe in the Father's possession. Its contents remain un-tampered and authoritative.

Revelation 5:1 I saw on the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

Beginning in 5:1 John sees three things (*kai eidon* v 1, 2, 6). First, John sees **a scroll...in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne**. The scroll is **written inside and on the back** and is **sealed up with seven seals**. First of all, the location of the scroll. The verse actually says **I saw on the right hand of Him**, that is, upon the palm of His **right hand**. He is not grasping the scroll tightly but it merely rests in the cup of His right palm. Who's right palm is this? The palm of the One sitting **on the throne**. As per chapter 4, this is, of course, God the Father. What is in His right palm? A scroll. This is not like a modern book but a scroll made of either papyrus or animal skins that rolls up. This scroll is written on the **inside and on the back**. The detailed terms of the contract are written on the inside of the rolled up scroll so no one can see what it says. The back of the scroll is the outside of the rolled up scroll and a short summary of the contract is written there. Some authors say, "The decrees of God contained herein are extensive and comprehensive. They constitute the whole counsel of God regarding the future of the world. No further revelation may be anticipated (cf. Rev. 22:18)."¹ As per the inner contents of the scroll they are **sealed up with seven seals**. The word **sealed** (*katesphragizo*) is a stronger word than the simple verb

for seal (*sphragizo*). It emphasizes the security of the sealing. The contents are securely sealed. What are they sealed with? They are sealed with **seven seals**. **Seven** is the number of perfection in Scripture so that the scroll is perfectly sealed. What was used to seal the scroll? Probably wax with an impression made on it which then hardened and kept unauthorized people from accessing the contents. One question which should be raised here is, “How can John see the seven seals if they are placed within the document.



In Rev 6 the seals are broken one after another (6:1, 3, 5, et. al.). Between each seal judgments come upon the earth executing the content unveiled after each seal is broken. How then could John see that the scroll had seven seals? The seals are visible on one end of the scroll, though spaced at intervals throughout the inner part of the roll.

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

The second thing John sees (*kai eidon*) is a **mighty angel** stepping forward with a thundering voice asking, in effect, “Who has the right credentials to open the scroll and break its seals?” Some have speculated as to the name of this **mighty angel**. Some have said Gabriel and others have said this is Michael, the archangel. It seems best not to speculate about the name of this angel since we are simply not told. All we know is that he is a **strong** or **mighty angel**. The word for **mighty** is *ischuros* and means the kind of power that can be observed by others. Arnold Schwarzenegger may appear strong but when you see him lifting weights then a whole new dimension of his strength is observed. It is strength being actively demonstrated. This **mighty angel** demonstrates his might by **proclaiming with a loud voice** (*phone megale* – “megaphone”). His strength allows him to make a proclamation that reaches to the remotest parts of the universe. The search has begun for one “**Who is worthy to open the scroll even to break its seals**”. The credential is **worthiness** (*axios*). What is required to make someone **worthy**? Two things: first, Rev 5:9 says that the worthy one is “worthy because He has redeemed us with His blood.” So, first, he must be the earth’s Redeemer. Second, Rev 5:5 connects the worthy one to David. David was king in the OT and David was promised an eternal kingdom. So, one who is worthy must be a legitimate offspring of David so He can fulfill the Messianic office and He must do the work of redemption. This office and work are the credentials that make someone worthy to **open the scroll even to break its seals.**” It is confusing to take this

final phrase as two separate acts. If you do it sounds like opening the scroll is different than breaking its seals. But this is one act. One opens the scroll by breaking the individual seals.

Revelation 5:3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

Here, the whole universe is searched to find someone worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. The search starts in heaven, the most likely place to find someone able. This search would involve investigating all the elect angels and dead saints now in paradise. Since no one is found here who is able the search moves to earth, the second most likely place to find someone able. Those on earth would involve investigating the worthiness of all living saints and unbelievers. Since no one is found here who is able the search finally expands to **under the earth**, the least like place to find someone able. This search involves investigating all the dead held in sheol/hades as well as fallen angels who are locked up in *tartaros* (2 Pt 2:4) or other locations (e.g. Rev 9:14). All of heaven, all of earth, and all of the underworld are searched and none was able to open the scroll or even to look into it. Why can't Mohammed open it? Why can't Joseph Smith? Where is Buddha? Where is Confucius? Where are all the great moral teachers who propagated their opinions. Aren't these men worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals? The answer is, no! None of these meet the credentials of being a legitimate offspring of David and none redeemed the earth. So, the search for one worthy has produced no one! No one is found who can look at the scrolls contents.

Revelation 5:4 Then I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

As a result, John begins to **weep greatly**. There are two words for **weep** in the Greek. *dakruo*, meaning, "to weep silently" "to shed tears silently, and then there is *klaio*, meaning "to weep loudly". This second word is used here. John is not just weeping silently but his weeping is accompanied by great wails. This should be translated **weep loudly**. "This weeping was unrestrained emotion by one who was in an ecstatic state" (Swete). Why is John **weeping loudly**? Because if no one is found worthy to open the book or to look into it then perhaps the earth will never be reclaimed by mankind. This means that Israel's covenants will not be fulfilled until who knows when? Another postponement of God's fulfilling His promises to Israel is devastating to John. Therefore, he broke out in tears accompanied by wailing.

Revelation 5:5 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 to open the scroll even its seven seals."

In the midst of John's loud weeping **one of the elders** (one of the 24) 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 scroll even its seven seals."** The 24 elders were first introduced in Rev 4:4 and here we see one come forth from the group. Initially, I taught that the 24 were representative of the church. In light of the context and other issues I've re-evaluated my view. I think these 24 represent all redeemed humanity. One of the representatives from redeemed humanity steps forward and commands John to **stop weeping**. It is not time to weep. It is time to rejoice. **weeping** was not fitting at this time because of what the Lion is about to do—open the seven sealed scroll and re-claim what is rightfully His and set up His eternal theocratic kingdom on earth. The Lion, of course, is our Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ. He has the credentials so that he is able to open the scroll. He fulfills the criteria of filling the Messianic Kingly Office by being a descendant of David (v 5) and He fulfilled the work of Redeemer on the cross (v 9).

behold (*idou*) grabs our attention and focuses it on **the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David**. Emphatically positioned in this verse is the phrase **has overcome**. So, that the verse, literally stated, says, **behold, has overcome, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, to open the scroll even its seven seals**. The emphasis is on the overcoming Lion. When did Christ **overcome**? Rev 3:21 infers that Jesus Christ overcame at the cross and then ascended and sat down on the Father's throne. This aorist tense of **overcome** signals the cross event. At the cross Israel's Messiah was like a lion that defeated the enemies of God. C. S. Lewis captured this picture well in his children's book, "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe". The Christ figure in this story is a Lion named Aslan and Aslan, the most noble, is slain but in His death He actually defeats His enemies.

The phrase **lion of the tribe of Judah** alludes to Gen 49:9 where Judah is described as a lion. Jesus Christ is of the **tribe of Judah**. He is the Lion. The Lion pictures

1. nobility
2. king
3. might
4. boldness
5. strength
6. majesty

7. courage

The second title here is **root of David**. The root is that which something springs from. Jesus Christ sprung from David. He is David's offspring. He is therefore rightly king of Israel. This alludes back to Isa 11:1, 10

Isaiah 11:1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

Isaiah 11:10 Then in that day 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.

Since the Lion has overcome and is victorious He will now open the scroll. "The opening of the scroll is best seen as the object or purpose of Jesus' conquest" on the cross. The reason He paid the redemption price and "won the victory was to enable Him to open this scroll of destiny and its seals and implement God's purposes throughout the final stages of human history" (Charles).

Revelation 5:6 And I saw in center of the throne and of the four living creatures and in center of the elders a Lamb standing, as slain, having horns seven and eyes seven, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

The third thing John saw (*kai eidon*) was a Lamb standing, as slain, in the center of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the center of the elders. Expositors have questioned where exactly the Lamb is located. The phrase **in between** has confused many. It means "in the middle" or more precisely, "in the center". The slain Lamb is in the center of the throne. We already know from Rev 3:21 that He is on the throne of His Father.

Revelation 3:21 He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

Jesus Christ is the centerpiece of all throughout the whole Book of Revelation. In the next verse the Lamb comes and takes the scroll out of the right hand of the Father. This signifies that He merely moves from the right hand of the Father to a position where He could take the scroll. Here Jesus Christ is pictured as a Lamb. This stands in sharp contrast to the Lion. The Lamb is a figure that always describes the crucified Messiah. When John the Baptist saw the Messiah approaching he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It was the crucifixion of the Lamb of God which took away the

sin of the world. Now, one need only place his trust in the Lamb of God to receive eternal life. A Lamb is

1. meek
2. gentle
3. led

Yet, this Lamb has some different characteristics than your normal lamb. The Lamb of God has **horns seven and eyes seven**. The **horn**, in the OT, is a symbol of strength or power. He has **seven horns**. **seven** is the perfect number. Therefore, in this context, the Lamb is portrayed as all powerful or omnipotent. He also has **eyes seven**. The **eyes** symbolize intelligence, wisdom, and sight. He has **seven eyes**. **seven** is the perfect number. Therefore, in this context, the Lamb is portrayed as “all-knowing” or omniscient. As I said before, this Lamb is not your ordinary Lamb, this Lamb is omnipotent and omniscient.

Notice the Lamb’s posture. He’s **standing, as slain**. He’s was slain but He is not lying down as slain. He’s standing. He is not dead, He is standing alive. The marks of His death on the cross are visible, but because of His resurrection from the dead they are not debilitating. This is the crucified, risen Lord Jesus Christ. “As a Lion He has supreme power, as a Lamb He is the supreme sacrifice.” He is the Passover Lamb.

Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth.

Returning to the **seven eyes**, which stand for His omniscience. The way His omniscience is described by the relative clause **which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth**. The **seven eyes** amount to the Holy Spirit (cf Rev 1:4) who Jesus Christ sent to take up residence in the world on the Day of Pentecost. The doctrine of procession (sending) is clearly in view. In John 16:7, Jesus said,

John 16:7 "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

The doctrine of procession deals with the question of “who sends who?” in the Trinity. It does not touch their essence. All are God, but each is an individual person. Thus, we say, God is one in essence and three in person. We order the Father, Son, and Spirit as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd person’s of the Trinity in order to give the order of procession. The Father is sent

by no one, therefore, He is the 1st person. The Father sent the Son, therefore, the Son is the 2nd Person. Since the Father and the Son sent the Spirit then the Spirit is the 3rd Person. The 3rd Person has been sent into the world to take up residence and to be Christ's agent in keeping in touch with affairs on earth.

Revelation 5:7 And He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Here Christ moves to a position from the right hand of the Father to take the scroll out of the palm of His right hand. That the Father allows Him to take the scroll signifies that it is now time for God to execute His plan for the redemption of the world. Only the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David is qualified to do this because it was His victorious death which purchased the world. Now He is preparing to take possession of it and administer its affairs. The verb **he took** is a perfect tense meaning past completed action with ongoing results. It is an *intensive perfect* emphasizing a dramatic transaction taking place here. This is no time to weep. This is a time to rejoice. One from our own kind, our Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ has purchased the world near 2,000 years ago, fulfilling the first responsibility of a Kinsman. Here we are witnessing, with John, the yet future second responsibility of a Kinsman; His preparations to take possession of the purchased possession and administration of its affairs. This is what the rest of Revelation and human history is all about.

Today we have looked at a Lion and a Lamb. At first, a seven sealed scroll is seen resting in the palm of the Father's hand. Then, a mighty angel asks, with a voice that reverberates throughout the entire universe, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals." A universal search begins in heaven, moves to earth, and finally to the underworld. None are found who are able. This causes John to weep loudly because this means indefinite delay for the fulfillment of God's plan in history, the restoration of the Jewish people and the re-establishment of the theocratic kingdom on earth. But John is then commanded to stop weeping because of the majestic, noble, strong, courageous Lion. He comes from the tribe of Judah. He is the root even offspring of David. He has overcome by paying the redemption price by shedding His precious blood. Finally, John sees the centerpiece of all reality, a Lamb, the crucified Messiah. Not dead but alive forevermore. Having all power and all knowledge, having sent the Spirit as His agent into the world. And the Lamb comes from His position at the right hand of the Father and takes the scroll from the Father. It is time to execute the plan of world redemption that the whole creation longs for and it is time to go "back to Genesis" (Matt 19:28) and the conditions of the "garden of Eden" (Ezek 36). It is time for righteousness to rule on the earth and peace and justice and harmony. The

world is ripe for judgment and His time of judgment; His time of cleansing the earth. And Jesus Christ says,

Revelation 1:3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Are you ready? If not, this terrible Day of the Lord may sweep upon you. Salvation is of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus Christ. This fact is true whether people are willing to face this fact or not (John 4:22)! Salvation is not by good works but by believing in Him. Only He qualifies to open the seven sealed scroll because only He has made a perfect payment for sin, only He has the kind of righteousness you need to get to heaven. His righteousness must be imputed to your account. And this only comes by faith in Him. Don't think that you can wait till tomorrow. Tomorrow may be too late. If you leave this world without trusting in Jesus Christ then you are doomed to the same fate as Satan who was defeated at the cross. The only way of escape, the only thing separating you from God is believing in Jesus Christ. He alone is worthy. Alone none of us are worthy. We must have His worth imputed to our accounts. Our good works are but filthy rags so that God is not interested in our good works. He's only interested in the works of His only begotten Son. If you believe upon Christ and Christ alone then His righteousness is applied to your account. Will you believe upon Him today? He won't turn you away.

ⁱ Robert Thomas, *Revelation 1-7: An Exegetical Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1992), 380.

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