

Subject: *Worthy Is the Lamb*

Scripture: *Revelation 5:1-14*

The main focus of this heavenly scene is Christ the Lamb who is worthy all praise and worship. This is the climax of redemptive history. The Bible has some main themes that run from Genesis to Revelation that are like threads in a piece of clothing: the golden thread of God's glory and grace; the black thread of sin and death; and the scarlet thread of blood redemption.

Attached to the scarlet thread of redemption is the truth of a lamb sacrificed to make atonement for sin. In Genesis 4 we read the story of Cain and Abel and *the lamb required* by God. In Genesis 22 we read the story of Abraham and Isaac and *the lamb provided* by God. In Exodus 12 we read the story of Israel and the Passover and *the lamb selected and killed* by every family. In Isaiah 53 we read of *the lamb prophesied* as the sinner's substitute. In John 1 we read the announcement of John the Baptist and *the lamb identified*. And here is Revelation 5 we see the heavenly scene where *the lamb is worshiped*.

What did John describe in this heavenly scene of worship? He saw one seated on a throne, a book (scroll) written on both sides and sealed with seven seals, a strong angel, 24 elders, 4 living creatures (beasts), multitudes of angels, every creature in the universe, and the Lamb (Christ). The whole scene revolves around the Lamb, the one found worthy to take the scroll and open it.

1. The search for the worthy one (vs. 1-4)

In verse 1 John saw God the Father on His throne with a book (scroll) sealed with seven seals in His right hand. This scroll represents the title deed to earth, the right and authority to rule the world. This scroll was the title deed to what rightfully belongs to God. This is the moment that all Christians and the whole creation long for.

In verse 2 John saw a strong angel who proclaimed with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose the seals?" The question echoed to every part of the universe, and no one was worthy and able to open the scroll. John wept much. The word "weep" (*klaio*) is the same word used to describe Christ weeping over Jerusalem (Lk. 19:41) and Peter's bitter crying after denying the Lord (Lk. 22:62). It is a word that expresses strong emotion. By the way, this is the only time that we read of crying in heaven. John was heartbroken because no man was found to be worthy. But the search was about to be over.

2. The selection of the worthy one (vs. 5-7)

It is surprising that one of the elders describes Christ as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah," but looked and saw a Lamb. This is no ordinary lamb. This Lamb was the Root of David. This Lamb prevailed (has overcome) to open the book and loose the seven seals. At the cross He defeated sin, death, and all the forces of hell. Believers are overcomers because He overcame.

John saw a Lamb as it had been slain (Christ died); he saw a Lamb standing (He rose from the dead); and he saw a sovereign Lamb (one who was worthy to take the book and open the seals). John saw a Lamb with seven horns (a symbol of complete, absolute power) and he saw a Lamb with seven eyes (a symbol of complete, absolute knowledge). The Lamb took the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father (vs. 7) because he had the right, the authority to take it and open it. The worthy one has taken back what is rightfully His.

Donald Barnhouse, a well known Bible preacher and commentator said that there are four things out of place in the universe: the church, which should be in heaven; Israel, which should occupy all the promised land; Satan, who belongs in the lake of fire; and Christ, who should be seated on His throne reigning. One day all four will be in their rightful place.

Christ has many titles and names, but the one used most in Revelation is the Lamb. This is God's way to remind us of Christ's great work of redemption. He died for our sins as the Lamb of God, the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. The word translated "lamb" (*arnion*) means a little lamb or pet lamb. This may be a connection back to the Passover, when Jewish families kept their Passover lamb as a household pet for four days before they sacrificed it (Ex. 12:3-6). Every lamb that was sacrificed under the Old Covenant pointed toward Christ, but only once is Christ referred to as a lamb in ***Isaiah 53:7*** *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

In the New Testament, outside of Revelation, Christ is called a lamb only four times (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pet. 1:19). But in Revelation He appears as the Lamb 31 times.

3. The song of the worthy one (vs. 8-14)

The Lamb taking the scroll out of God's right hand causes praise to break out. It is a song of redemption that focuses on the worthiness of the Lamb and His right to take the scroll and break open the seals. The breaking of these seals begins in Revelation 6 with the first in a series of judgments on the world that lead up to Christ's return and enthronement as King of kings.

This song focuses on the death of Christ as the redeemer of a people out of every kindred, language, people, and nation. Redemption is a main theme in Scripture. The OT says a redeemer is coming. The NT says the redeemer has come. The OT tells about the promise of a redeemer. The NT tells us about the person who is the redeemer, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Redemption involves three things:

- A. Christ redeems us from something – He redeems us from sin, from the curse, from Satan, and from the world.
- B. Christ redeems us for something – He redeems us to worship, serve, and glorify Him.

C. Christ redeems us by something – He redeems us by His blood. Redemption is personal and redemption is costly.

1 Peter 1:18-19¹⁸ *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;*¹⁹ *But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*

The words of the great hymn *The Church's One Foundation* says:
From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her, and for her life He died.

When we get to heaven we will sing forever of the Lamb who redeemed us by His blood. John described this as “a new song” (vs. 9). It is new quality rather than new in time. It is a new song that flows out hearts made new by God’s grace. This new song will resonate if your heart has been made new. In verse 11 we see a countless number of angels joining in praise to the Lamb. In verse 12 they say that the Lamb is worthy to receive seven things: power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing.

The praise reaches its grand conclusion in verse 13 when every creature offers praise to God the Father and Christ the Lamb: endless blessing, endless honor, endless glory, endless power. The four living creatures say, Amen, and the 24 elders fall down again and worship. The stage is set for God to unleash his judgments and Christ to return to set up His earthly kingdom. That’s what we long for and what we pray for, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”