

Worthy is the Lamb!

Text: Revelation 5:1-14

Introduction:

1. Chapter 4 & 5 contain a powerful, heavenly scene that forms a prelude to the commencement of the outpouring of God's judgments upon the earth in the Tribulation. We find the church not on earth anticipating the outpouring of God's wrath, but in heaven, worshipping around the throne of God.
2. The key word in chapter 4 is 'worthy', appearing 4 times. In chapter 4, the primary focus was upon God the Father; the focus in chapter 5 is God the Son. In chapter 4 the theme of the worship was **Creation**, now in chapter 5 the theme is **Redemption**.

We will divide our chapter under 3 headings for this study:

I. **The Proclamation for one Worthy (Vs. 1-4)**

A. **The Sealed Book (Vs. 1)**

1. 'book' = Greek word 'biblion'. Same word translated 'scroll' in Rev. 6:14.
2. "in the right hand" = reveals the book's importance and prominence.
3. "written within and on the backside" = writing usually on one side of a scroll but this one is written on both sides indicating the comprehensiveness and completeness of its message.
4. "sealed with seven seals" = Wills in the Roman world were sometimes sealed 7 times (Walvoord). "Such a seal was an impression usually made on clay, wax or some other soft material that restricted an unauthorized person from access to the contents" (Thomas). The seals were fixed on the edges of the scroll in such a way that the seals would have to be successively broken for the scroll to be unrolled and read.
5. The contents of the Book are revealed in the following chapters of Revelation. They contain the final judgments of God that will bring about the end of this world system and lead to the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of Christ's Kingdom. "It contains God's program for judging the world and overthrowing the devil and putting Christ on the throne of the world." (Cloud) The scroll is a comprehensive account of the future wrath of the Lamb (6:17).

B. **The Strong Angel (Vs. 2-3)**

1. A significant angelic being lays down a charge for one worthy to step forward to open the book and reveal its contents (Vs. 2). Angels are mentioned 63 times in Revelation excluding the reference of chapter 2 & 3 (Cloud).

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2. No man in the universe is able to open the Book (Vs. 3). The proclamation is intended to provide a setting and context for highlighting Christ as the only Man worthy to open the Book.

C. The Sorrowful Prophet (Vs. 4)

1. "I wept much" = the tears of God's man. Great men in the Bible, including Christ, knew what it was to shed tears of grief.
2. Lyle: "John's tears represent the weeping of all God's people down through the centuries. These are our tears, longing for God to make a disordered world right."
3. Why did John weep? The scroll had to be opened and the seals broken for God's purposes to be fulfilled. From John's perspective, not knowing what was about to happen, it seemed that somehow the grand purposes of God for the future would be postponed.

II. The Person found to be Worthy (Vs. 5-7)

A. The Lion – Christ's Majesty (Vs. 5)

1. The lion is a picture of royalty, majesty, strength and power. Prov. 30:30 *"A lion...is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any;"*
2. "of the tribe of Judah" = Christ came of the line of Judah in fulfillment of O.T. prophecy. Gen. 49:8-10 *"Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. **Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."***
3. The lion pictures Christ as Judge and Sovereign. The One who will put down man's rebellious wickedness and give justice (Psalm 2:7-12).

B. The Lamb – Christ's Meekness (Vs. 6)

1. "in the midst of the throne" = the Lamb is the center of all that transpires in heaven. He is the focal center of the universe.
2. The lamb is a picture of tenderness, humility and mercy. The lamb is a picture of Christ at His first coming when He came to be a sacrifice for man's sin.
3. Christ is called the Lamb 28 times in Revelation. He is the Lion-Lamb! At Christ's first coming we saw the Lamb as the Sacrifice. Now in Revelation we see the Lamb as the Sovereign, pouring out the wrath of God against sin.
4. Some observations about the Lamb in this verse:
 - a. He is alive as He is standing – 'stood'

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- b. He bears the marks of death – ‘as it had been slain’ The evidence of death was still visible. Even in His glorified body, Christ still bears the marks of the cross as eternal memorials of His sacrifice for us (John 20:27). “Rich wounds yet visible above in beauty glorified” (Hymn). For all eternity, we will never forget Calvary.
- c. He has seven horns, picturing the Omnipotence of Christ. Horns speak of strength in the Bible (1 Sam. 2:10).
- d. He has seven eyes, picturing the Omniscience of Christ. The seven eyes represent the Holy Spirit whom Christ’s possesses without measure. The Omnipresence of the Spirit is pictured in His activities throughout the whole earth.

C. The Lord – Christ’s Might (Vs. 7)

- 1. Christ receives the Book from the Father’s right hand. This represents a momentous transfer of power.
- 2. Acts 17:31 *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”*
- 3. Walvoord: “In the act of receiving the book from God the Father, it is made evident that judgment and power over the earth are committed to Christ the Son of God...In that future day complete authority over the world will be realized by Christ, an authority which He will exercise both in the judgements which precede His second coming and in His reign for one thousand years which will follow His second advent.”
- 4. So significant is this event that it invokes what is probably the most glorious scene of heavenly worship revealed in Scripture.

III. The Praise for the One Worthy (Vs. 8-14)

The scene is described as concentric circles, with the Lamb in the center.

A. The Worship of the Redeemed (Vs. 8-10)

Notice that the inner circle of worshippers is composed of redeemed sinners.

- 1. Their Homage (Vs. 8)
 - a. Obeisance – “fell down before the Lamb”
 - b. Orchestra – “having every one of them harps” Harps are the only instruments mentioned in heavenly worship (Walvoord).
 - c. Odors – “golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints” David wrote, “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)
- 2. Their Hymn (Vs. 9-10)

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- a. Christ Died for us! (vs. 9a)
 - i. “thou wast slain” = slaughtered, put to death by violence.
 - ii. Reminds us of Christ’s death on the cross (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:3). Heaven sings about the cross and the blood!
 - iii. Sir Robert Anderson: “Eternity in the past knew no other future than Calvary’s Cross: eternity in the future will know no other past than Calvary’s Cross.”
- b. Christ Redeemed us! (Vs. 9b)
 - i. “and hast redeemed us to God” = the word ‘redeemed’ means to “purchase at the marketplace.” Christ bought us back from the slave market of sin and Satan. Eph. 1:7 *“In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;”* Gal. 3:13 *“Christ hath **redeemed** us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:”*
 - ii. “by thy blood” = the price of our redemption. 1 Peter 1:18 *“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; But with **the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:”*
 - iii. “out of every kindred, and tongue...” = the extent of Christ’s redemption
- c. Christ Elevated us! (Vs. 10)

B. The Worship of the Angels (vs. 11-12)

1. The Count of the Angels (Vs. 11)
 - a. “ten thousand times ten thousand” = 100 million
 - b. “thousands of thousands” = myriads of myriads. Language intended to convey an innumerable number (Heb. 12:22). “The sense of the word usage is of a number beyond counting” (Preacher’s Commentary).
2. The Chorus of the Angels (Vs. 12)
 - a. “with a loud voice” = imagine the combined volume of millions upon millions of angels! We will need glorified bodies to be able to handle such volume!
 - b. The 7 attributes of Christ (Definitions by Dr. R. Jeffress)
 - i. Power – there is no plan or purpose Christ can’t carry out.
 - ii. Riches – there is no promise Jesus doesn’t have the resources to fulfill.
 - iii. Wisdom – there is no problem Jesus Christ can’t solve.
 - iv. Might – there are no powers of evil Jesus can’t defeat.
 - v. Honor – there are no princes that Jesus Christ does not rule above.

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- vi. Glory – there are no principalities that Jesus doesn't have Divine rights to.
- vii. Blessing – there are no privileges that Jesus has not used in the service of others.

C. The Worship of the Creation (Vs. 13-14)

1. The declaration (Vs. 13)
 - a. "every creature" = all of creation joins in the praise
 - b. "under the earth" = likely refers to souls in hell as hell is said to be 'down' in Scripture (Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15). Every tongue will confess Christ as Lord (Phil. 2:9-11).
 - c. "be unto him...upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" = equal praise given to both the Father and the Son. Clear evidence of Christ's Deity.
 - d. John Phillips writes:

"From every possible sphere and from every single tongue there rings out an acknowledgment at last that Jesus Christ is Lord. There will not be a single dissenting voice. The fallen angels, the angels imprisoned in the abyss, the angels bound near the Euphrates, the demon hordes, Satan himself, wicked, Christ-rejecting sinners of earth, one and all acknowledge Him as Lord. Deep in every heart will be the absolute conviction that the choice of Jesus is wise and just and blessed and honorable...God has placed into the hands of men the decision as to whether or not they will accept Christ as Saviour, but the decision as to whether or not they will acknowledge Him as Lord is not theirs to decide...He will be praised at the focal center of things by the sinless sons of light and by the redeemed of all ages with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And He will be praised at the furthest circumference of things by every damned and outcast soul with sobs and tears and choking cries."

2. The affirmation (Vs. 14)
3. Illustration: Handel's Messiah – includes the words of 5:9, 12 & 13. He wrote the 250,000 musical notes of this massive oratory in 24 days, and at the end he exclaimed, "I think I did see heaven before me, and the great God Himself." According to tradition, at a performance in 1743, Britain's King George II stood up at the "Hallelujah Chorus" in honor of Jesus Christ. (Cloud)

Conclusion:

1. Do you know Christ as Saviour? Will you confess Him as Lord now?
2. Are you living with eternity's values in view? Or are you living for the cheap glitter of this world and its misplaced priorities? Revelation puts earth and heaven in proper perspective.