

# The Lamb Who is Worthy

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**Bible Text:** Revelation 5:1-10  
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Turn with me in the Bible to the last book of the Bible, Revelation, where our text is found in chapter 5, but we're going to begin reading at chapter 4, and read these two short chapters, 4 and 5. The text is chapter 5, verses 1 through 10. I won't reread them. Pay careful attention to all of the reading, and especially to that. This is God's word, beginning in Revelation 4.

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. 2 And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. 6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. 5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. 11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

That's the reading of the Holy Scripture.

If you would have looked in heaven at the time that Christ ascended, what would you have seen? Had you been able to be up there with the saints already made perfect and not down here with the disciples who were looking up, who only saw Jesus go up and disappear behind the clouds, if you were up there in heaven, what would you have seen when Jesus ascended? And it's our inability to answer that question very well that shows that we need to study more carefully the truth of the ascension of the Lord Jesus, because we all know the other major events in the life of Christ and their significance, even the children do, but very few of us, even adults, understand the significance of his ascension. Of course, The children say, Christmas is Jesus' birth. God came down from heaven to be made like us so that he could make payment for our sins. And then 33 and a half years later, the children can even say on Good Friday, we worship, come to church, because that commemorates the death of our Lord Jesus Christ where he made perfect satisfaction

for all of our sins. And no one mistakes what Easter Sunday three days later is all about, where that dead Lord Jesus now becomes the living Lord, rising from the dead, becoming the power of our resurrection life. And some even understand that 10 days from tonight is Pentecost, and some even realize that at Pentecost, Jesus came back in the Spirit, poured out the Spirit upon the church. But it's this event that we celebrate tonight that we don't think about very often and we need to because it is just as significant why the Reformed Fathers said you ought to worship on these special days, including Ascension Day, and how many Psalms don't commemorate the ascension of the king into the city, which was a type of the ascension of Christ up into heaven.

If you would have seen Jesus ascend up into heaven from heaven's perspective, you would have seen him reach out his hand to the hand of the one that was sitting on the throne and take out of the hand of the one sitting on the throne a book. And then heaven rejoiced. And then a great chorus was started. And then praise to God's name because he is the one who was able to open that book and accomplish all of God's purposes. And that's just a little summary of what I want briefly to preach tonight, that Jesus Christ is the one ascended to open the book and he's able to open the book because he's declared worthy to open that book. So we need to explain what the book is, what the opening of the book is, and why Jesus is the one worthy to open it. Those three things, let's look briefly at Revelation 5:1 through 10 under that theme, "Worthy to Open the Book."

The book that Jesus, the Lamb, took out of the hand of the one that was sitting upon the throne is the focus of the text, but we need to back out for a moment and see the vision, which is why I began reading in chapter 4. The vision that John saw was the vision of a throne and someone sitting on that throne described in terms that aren't human at all, glorious as the most precious gemstone and whatever else we read in chapter 4, and proceeding from him and from the throne, thunders and lightnings, and all of us understand this is a vision that John saw with his eyes of God, God on the throne. Around God on that throne were 24 elders representing 12 and 12 Old Testament and New Testament tribes and disciples, 24 elders representing the Old and New Testament, that is, the church of Christ of the old dispensation and the new dispensation, God surrounded by the church. And then we see in that vision in chapter 4, four beasts, and you children mustn't think of a beast being some scary creature, but simply an animal, not a person. Although the description of some of these beasts might be somewhat fearful, it was not intended to be that; those beasts represent earthly creation. And those beasts join in the elders with praise to God and say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come."

John was told to look and we are to look, that is, with our spiritual eyes, but thinking in the picture language of Revelation. Symbolism is going to teach us. And now that we've looked at the big picture, we need now to look carefully at the right hand of the one who is sitting on the throne, look at his right hand and see what's in that right hand. The Bible calls it a book but you mustn't imagine a book like this, you must imagine a book that's a scroll. And you children, perhaps, can think of a scroll like a small roll of paper towels which, if your mom let you, you could unroll a long ways. That's how they made books in the old days. This scroll had writing on one side of the paper and writing on the other

side of the paper, and this scroll was all rolled up, and on the end of the scroll you could see at different levels perhaps pieces we might think of tape that seal that scroll so that it can't be unrolled. And if one of those seals is taken off, it can be unrolled up to the other seal, and then it needs to stop. Seven seals on this scroll in the hand of God.

What does that scroll represent? Well, because the scroll is in God's hand, and has writing in it, we may conclude that this scroll represents the thinking and the willing of the all-wise God. His thoughts are in this book and because the scroll is written on both front and back, we may conclude that this book represents all of God's thoughts. There aren't any blank pages or spaces on this scroll. Everything that God thinks and wills to do is written in this scroll. And then third, because there are seven seals sealing this scroll, and seven is a covenant number, we put all of these things together and conclude that these thoughts that are written in the book are God's thought regarding his covenant and the establishment of his covenant and kingdom with all of his people. God and us. God the friend sovereign and we the friend servant. All of God's thoughts with regard to his covenant and kingdom and fellowship with us. Everything. Your salvation and mine. How that would be accomplished, especially now new dispensation. The sending forth of the gospel as it's going to you tonight from a sermon and the sending forth of missionaries to every nation of the world so that God's people, all of them, may be gathered written in this book. Not the Bible now, but the scroll that represents all of God's thoughts with regard to the new dispensation and his covenant relationship with us. All of us. How we're gathered. When we're gathered. How we are preserved, and so forth.

And in addition to that, because the world surrounds the church here in the new dispensation, in that scroll are God's thoughts with regard to the development of the anti-Christian world, and how it's going to come and oppose the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the thoughts and wisdom of God as to how he's going to protect the little flock that's precious to him in the world, and all of the thoughts of God with regard to famines and pestilences and death and wars and nations and so forth. And now you understand, I'm simply explaining what the book of Revelation explains post-Revelation 5. Open the book, this book, and read 6 and 7 and all the way to the end, and you will see what those thoughts of God are.

Now this book needs to be opened, and that's the key to the text. It's closed, rolled up, and it's sealed so that it can't be opened. What is the opening of the book? It is, in part, the revelation of what God is thinking and what God is going to be doing. That's the purpose of these visions. John is told what will shortly come to pass and the whole book of Revelation is an explanation of what shall come to pass in the new dispensation. But the opening of this book is not simply to look to see God's thoughts and to learn what God is going to do. The opening of this book is the actual carrying out of the decree of God. Now, I need to prove that to you, and I will in just a moment, but think, it's not the opening of this scroll simply to show John what's going to happen, but the opening of this scroll, seal by seal, is the actual execution of the counsel of God. The one who opens it does and carries out and performs what God has planned to take place.

That's evident from a number of things. Just think of a couple of them. In the first place, John cried and cried and cried because no one was found worthy to open the book. That's what we read. And John would not have wept sore, as the King James puts it, if he simply were not able to find out what God was going to do. If it were going to happen anyway, what was so important that John know what's going to happen? No, John wept because he understood if no one was able to open this book, the counsel of God could not take place.

That comes out in the second place because that anthem of praise that was sung when someone was found worthy to open the book, was sung exactly because someone was found able to carry out the decree of God. They would not have sung what they did, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing," had it simply been the case that the opening of the book was simply to show what would take place. No, it's the execution of the decree, and you know that especially because if you do know the book of Revelation, and remember what comes in chapter 6, the opening of the first seal, it's not just a revelation that a white horse is going to ride forth victoriously, but the opening of that first seal is the riding forth of that horse and that horse represents the gospel and the victorious gospel of the Lord Jesus that goes from nation to nation and kindred to kindred to gather in God's people. The opening of that seal actually sent that horse forth and if you know something about the other horses, red and black and pale and so forth, you know that they represent death. And so when Jesus unsealed that seal, Jesus unleashed death upon the world in the new dispensation, and pestilence and famine and wars and social unrest. Jesus, sitting upon the throne, who opens the book, does that and that's going to be the majority of the comfort at the end of the sermon this evening.

So understand the opening of this book, and you all knew it was Jesus anyway who was able to do it, the opening of this book is not simply the revelation of what is to come to pass, but actually the bringing it to pass. And then the challenge makes sense, "Who is worthy to open the book?" Now the challenge makes sense. That word worthy is very important. It means weighty, important, authoritative, strong, wise. Who has that kind of worth to be able to open that book and carry out the decrees of God? Who is able to send the white horse forth and the red and the black and the other horses? Who has that kind of worth? And then you understand that there was silence and no one was found. A search was made and there was no one. No man was worthy, found worthy to open and read the book, neither to look thereon. Scour heaven and find a man. Look on the earth and seek out a man. Look in the realms of hell and see if you can find a man. And the conclusion of the word of God is, no one, no man is found worthy.

And we need to let that sink in for just a few moments tonight. Would you dare come to the front of the line and say, "I perhaps have the substance, the power, the authority, the wisdom to execute God's counsel"? Really? To gather God's people, to accomplish their salvation, to send the preaching forth so that people are gathered in, and then to keep at bay the wicked world so the precious flock is preserved, and so orchestrate everything that takes place in the world, that nation rises against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and they laugh at the one in the heavens, but the one in the heavens is able to laugh back at them because he is in control? Who's worthy to do that? And we all realize

that there's no worth in us, authority, power, and right to do that. And so maybe we look outside of ourselves and say, "Who will establish the kingdom? Who will maintain God's covenant and cause?" And if you're not thinking very carefully, you may be tempted to say, "Well, maybe Trump will be re-elected, or instead of Trump, DeSantis or some other worthy." Or maybe you would say another party would be good in their place. Then ask yourself, are they worthy to execute God's counsel? Do they have the authority and the power and the wherewithal to do what God determines to be done? And of course, you dismiss that as a possibility and so maybe you turn not to a man, but to a system, and say if democracy and capitalism could really flourish, or if you dispel them, you want some other philosophy, economy, social, political philosophy, and then you shake your head too and say, "There's no man that's able and there's no system that's able." And we need to think about that very, very carefully and remember what the word of God says tonight, no man is worthy.

The book is sealed, unable to be opened until, until, and, of course, you know the secret. Of course, you know the secret. God provides the answer and now you must look again. Remember, these are visions. The intent is that we, with these eyes, think of things that John saw. First of all, he saw that vision of the 24 elders and the four beasts surrounding a throne, and on that glorious throne was God, and in God's right hand was a book, the scroll, and now you must look and see what the angel says John must see. "Don't weep. Behold." That means, Look. John, look. Don't cry. Wipe your tears. Clear your eyes. I have something else that you need to see. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the book and loose the seals thereof." And before John could look, he's thinking, the root of the tribe of David, the root of David, that is what gave David his kingdom power, what gave David his conquering might, what gave David and David's son Solomon their wealth and the extension of their kingdom. The root of David is here and John is thinking, root. Root. The root has regrown. The root that was cut off has now sprung again and appeared among them to become the offspring of David and rule his kingdom.

He's thinking root, he's thinking sprout, and then he begins thinking lion, the lion of the tribe of Judah. Children, think about what you see when you think about a lion, the king of beasts in all of its power. and confidence and authority before whom all of the other beasts almost cower in fear, able to take control. Think lion. Think lion has roared. Who will not fear? Think the one who comes to devour his foe and reigns supreme over all of the earth. Think root and think lion. And by the time John has the tears wiped away from his eyes, and he opens his eyes, he sees neither root nor lion, but lamb. A little lamb.

Now, children, see with your eyes a lamb. You maybe don't see lambs very often. Some of you maybe have never touched a lamb or seen one in person, but John had. John grew up as a little boy seeing lambs, and every year his family at the first of the year, this was their New Year's celebration, the first month, the 14th day of that first month was the Passover and they were looking in those 14 days that preceded the Passover for a lamb, a little lamb, a spotless lamb, a clean lamb, no broken legs lamb. They were looking for a lamb, and every year, John and his family would, out of the flock, take a lamb, innocent

little lamb, and slaughter it. The blood would shed, the lamb would die, and they would eat the meat from the lamb.

John recognized a lamb. This lamb, the text says, was slain, but the literal of the text is, it was slaughtered, and John knew exactly what that was about, too. A lamb that had been slaughtered. A violent death whose blood was poured out. That lamb, on Ascension Day, appeared in the presence of God for us and that Lamb now is worthy, weighty, substantial, powerful, authoritative, and wise. That Lamb is able to unloose the seals and to execute the counsel of God just exactly because he was slain. The slaying of that Lamb was the means by which he prevailed. and is able now to execute God's counsel. He's a lion because he was the Lamb.

He's able to do this because, as the shouting said, he redeemed us. Redeemed us. Bought us. Purchased us. And now, children, look at the Lamb again. Now the shape of this Lamb is different than you expected. Now out of the head of this Lamb comes seven horns and you know that horns are the symbols of power and this Lamb has covenantal power. Great power, but covenantal power. He's able, that is, he's strong, this Lamb is.

And this lamb, look carefully again, his seven eyes, strange vision. Dreams are often strange though, aren't they? They don't make sense, but this one does. This Lamb that had been slain that John saw, seven powerful horns to do what God wills to be done, and seven eyes representing the seven spirits of God who go all over the earth and the wisdom of God. Do you see him? You see him? Look at him now, who loosed the white horse. The Lamb sent that white horse out to preach the gospel, the message of the Lamb, to gather you, to gather your family, to gather your children. That Lamb sends forth the other horses, and in such a way that they will never harm the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lamb knows what nations to go to. The Lamb knows what men to send. The Lamb knows what dose of social unrest to put in the mix, that's one of the horses, too. And when this nation, Russia, will rise against this nation, Ukraine, and when those nations will rise up against other nations, the Lamb knows. He does. He's sending forth these horses. He is the one that shakes the earth. He's the one that sends the famine and the flood. The Lamb does. And because he's strong and because he's wise, he's able to do what God wills to do with regard to God, the friend sovereign, and his relationship to you, the friend servant. Jesus can.

So we have a perspective of the ascension that the disciples didn't have. Remember at the beginning I said about all we think about is what the disciples saw when Jesus was lifted up from them and disappeared out of their sight behind a cloud. And then he's gone. They didn't understand it. Even though they had been told by Jesus that it's expedient that he go away, they still didn't fathom why it was profitable for them. And so they went home, and some of them went fishing, and eventually when the Spirit was poured out upon them, it began to dawn on them how this was significant. And then one of them wrote John, wrote the book of Revelation some years later, and he began to understand. But if you had been in heaven and seen Jesus ascend, leading captivity captive, bringing the gifts that he had earned so that he can pour those gifts out upon us, those are the things that you would have seen. It would be like his coronation. How many were interested in the coronation

of King Charles a few weeks ago? I wasn't, but many are. It was the thing that the world was waiting to observe, the coronation, the final coronation of this prince to become the king in all of his glory. Well, now think of the King who's going to be crowned, crowned in all his glory. That's what happened on Ascension Day and that's why the 24 elders, all of the saints of the old dispensation, and representing those of the new, sang and shouted and said, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and honor and wisdom and strength and glory and blessing," and so forth, because they knew that when he finished his work on the cross, salvation is sure. They knew it and we know it too. How marvelous are the ways of God.

It's Ascension Day. How many of you are here, I'm so thankful to see so many of you here. Now, when you go home, children, Don't think about school, first of all, and the homework you'll still need to be done, and that you'll be getting to bed a little bit later than normal, maybe. Don't think about any of those things. Just think about what you heard in the sermon tonight, and talk about that with your parents, and think about that when you go to sleep and you pray. With your eyes of faith, see up in heaven Jesus, who ascended into all glory, crowned with glory and honor. See him with the strength of seven horns. See him with the wisdom of seven eyes. And see him with the love of the one who gave himself for you to pay for your sins. And see him controlling everything. Everything.

So don't be afraid about what's going to happen tonight. You must not be afraid of what might happen tomorrow. You mustn't be distressed and depressed about what happened yesterday. You must remember that the Lord Jesus Christ went up into heaven so that from that throne of all glory, he would execute God's counsel with regard to your salvation and mine, the gathering and the defending and the preserving of his precious church. And then this, think about the day when you and I will join that throng. Can you imagine what that must have sounded like? Can you imagine what that's going to sound like, angels, multitudes, thousands upon thousands, and millions of millions, and all of the people of God gathered together, and all of them shouting with one voice and one praise, "Glory be to God and to God's Son," in a song that's never going to end, ever, that will make you happy, so happy you'll cry, not with the tears of sorrow that John had, but with the tears of joy. God is God, and God is good. Amen.

Let's pray.

*Our Father which art in heaven, we thank thee for thy word. Send us home now with blessing, a blessing of hope and faith renewed, of love for thee and for the neighbor, and with a confidence that all is well because Jesus Christ sits upon the throne and is ready to come back again, and until he does, loves us and preserves us. Father, send us home with joy, and may our hearts, as we go to sleep, not be fearful, but joyful. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*