

**The Revelation to John**  
**Chapter Five**  
**Only Jesus is Worthy**  
**A Prelim Before Judgments Begin**

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The scene now shifts to reveal God the Redeemer. We will see that only Jesus is worthy to open a book and later we will understand the contents of the book. This chapter's purpose is mainly to reveal to the church and to us that Jesus Christ is the only worthy person. We will see frequent use of the number seven, which is the number of perfection or completion. As we study the remaining chapters it is important to remember that John was seeing an incredible revelation and often his gaze would shift from item to item and sometimes there would be some repetition as he looked back at something. I remember when we went up Mount Blanc in Italy. We rode up and kept seeing remarkable sights on the way and then we arrived at a tremendous height and got out and walked around. It was hard at first to walk because of the lack of oxygen but we quickly adjusted and then we would look out at the scene before us, look back at the mountain around and still above us and then always back to the scene below us. That was an amazing time but the experiences of John are much more amazing! The analogy is good, I think, to help us understand how he would look at different aspects of his surroundings.

We also noted in chapter four that Jesus was sitting on the throne. Remember that God is a Trinity and in this scene it is God the Father sitting on the throne and we will see Jesus the Son receiving the scroll.

**The Revealing of the One Who Can Open the Book**

**Rev 5:1 “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.**

**Rev 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"**

**Rev 5:3 And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.**

**Rev 5:4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;”**

We now see God the Father sitting on the throne with a scroll in His right hand, signifying ownership. This description probably means that the book was in His palm rather than being held. The “books” of that time were scrolls made mainly from sheepskin that were rolled from both ends and then sealed. The pages were made by pasting together two strips and usually writing was done only on one side but for an important occasion writings would be done on both sides. This book was sealed with seven seals. Each portion of the book would be sealed with a seal and when a final seventh seal was broken the entire book would be in view. The angel is not named but saying that he is a strong angel means a mighty angel who spoke with a loud voice

indicating authority and power. He announces to all that anyone who is worthy should come and break the main seal to open the book and then to break all the other seals. It was very quiet as nobody in all of creation answered the call! There was nobody worthy! This reminds me of Paul's statement:

*Rom 3:10 "as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one;"*

When John saw that there was no person in the entire creation who was worthy to open the book, he began to weep greatly. Perhaps he was weeping because he had been promised in verse 1 that he would see what would take place and now it seems that nobody can open the book.

**Rev 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 so as to open the book and its seven seals."**

**Rev 5:6 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."**

One of the elders told him to stop weeping for there is one Who can open the book and all of its seals. This person is described as the Lion of Judah but the person Who came forward appeared as a slain Lamb. The description of this person being the Lion from Judah is probably a reference to the promise:

*Gen 49:8 "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you.*

*Gen 49:9 "Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?"*

*Gen 49:10 "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."*

The Root of David is not in the Old Testament but the word for "root" really means a shoot and means a descendent rather than an ancestor. Thus what the elder is telling John is that this person is the direct descendent of King David, as foretold in Scripture of the Christ. Of course using the word "root" can mean that David came forth from the root, meaning chosen by God. Jesus is then both the root and the shoot. When the elder says that this person is the one who overcame, he means that He has earned total victory over all adversaries. He indeed is worthy!

The location of this lamb is in the middle of all that John is seeing. The word used for lamb means a small lamb. Since John had heard the words that the worthy one was a lion he would have been expecting to see a roaring lion. Instead he sees a small lamb, but not just any lamb. The Jews had been expecting the Christ to be a lion who would return them to freedom from oppression and greatness so they did not recognize the real Christ when Jesus came. But there was no mistaking this lamb for an inconsequential being! This lamb had the look of a slain lamb (as if slain) but He definitely was not slain now.

He was standing and He had seven horns and seven eyes. Of course the number seven means completion or perfection. The horn is often a symbol for strength:

*Deut 33:17 "As the first-born of his ox, majesty is his, And his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he shall push the peoples, All at once, to the ends of the earth. And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And those are the thousands of Manasseh."*

Having seven horns would then mean that He had the perfect power to do whatever He intended to do. Having seven eyes means that not only could He see everything, He could also see the heart of every matter. The modifying clause is for the seven eyes so they also could represent the seven spirits of the Holy Spirit as discussed earlier. Whatever the explicit meaning, the picture of this lamb is One who has all power and the vision to see into the heart of all matters before Him. John the Baptist also had a similar insight into the being of Jesus:

*John 1:29 "The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Being sent out into all the earth means that He had access to all affairs in the world. There would be no way to hide anything from Him and no way to defeat Him by any force on earth or in the realm of Satan.

**Rev 5:7 "And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.**

**Rev 5:8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."**

Jesus, as the lamb who conquered the sins of the world, then took the scroll from the Father. When everyone around the throne saw the Lamb take the scroll, they all fell before Him in worship. Each had a harp, which is a symbol for praise. Each also had a bowl of the prayers of the saints, which was incense to the throne of God. On earth the prayers of the saints are often ridiculed but, in heaven, they go to the throne of God and are precious in His sight.

- *Psa 141:2 "May my prayer be counted as incense before Thee; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering."*
- *Luke 1:10 "And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering."*

What a scene as these people realized that the long-anticipated time of the rule of the righteousness and justice of God was about to be released upon the world.

**Rev 5:9 "And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**

**Rev 5:10 "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.""**

The word for new signifies quality rather than date and fresh against recent. Since this scene is a new situation, it required a new song and that is what they spontaneously sang in praise. The song specifies the reason that Jesus is worthy. He was slain for the sins of the world and His blood purchased His chosen people from throughout the world including Jew and Gentile, free and slave, men and women. The total work of Jesus made these children of God to be His kingdom and priests to God. We will all reign in the new kingdom. All people will either rule or be denied.

- *Luke 22:28-30 "And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*
- *2Tim 2:12 "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him; If we deny Him, He also will deny us;"*

Some people wonder how we are priests but that is an easy question to answer as I did previously. A priest presents the requests of the people to God, he represents God to the people, and he offers sacrifices. We pray to God, we disciple and teach people about God, and we offer our bodies as a perfect sacrifice:

*Rom 12:1 "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."*

Yes we are priests but only because of the perfect life, sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If only I had a new song to sing praise for His work for me!

**Rev 5:11 "And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,**

**Rev 5:12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."**

**Rev 5:13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.""**

Now the scene becomes even more remarkable! He looked first and then he heard the singing as though it was one voice as they all sang in perfect unison. People have tried to determine the exact number but that seems to be a waste of time. Suffice it to say that there were an innumerable number of angels. Just as we cannot count the stars but there are indeed a certain number of them, we also cannot number the angels praising God.

The angels state in agreement with the others concerning the fact that he was slain to receive honor. The angels use seven (the perfect number or the number of completion) attributes of Jesus to state His worthiness: power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing. The first four state His qualities and the last three are what are given to Him by all people. Morris reminds us that all of these qualities are described of Jesus elsewhere in the New Testament:

- 1.) Power (1 Cor 1:24)
- 2.) Wealth (2 Cor 2:8; Eph 3:8)
- 3.) Wisdom (1 Cor 1:24)
- 4.) Strength (Eph 6:10; 2 Thess 1:9)
- 5.) Honor (Heb 2:9; cf. Phil 2:11)
- 6.) Glory (John 1:14; Heb 2:9)
- 7.) Blessing (Rom 15:29)

Soon, in the vision, this group will march into the world to carry out the orders of God upon the world. John now tells us that all of creation joins the others in praise. The praise is for the Father and Jesus as they are inseparably linked. The Spirit has also been included indirectly with attributes of Jesus. Thus the Trinity is praised by this huge grouping of all creation! They offer blessings and honor and they state that God will have glory and dominion forever.

**Rev 5:14 “And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.”**

It is impossible for me to add anything to this except to also say “Amen”.