

THE SEVEN- SEALED SCROLL (REVELATION 5)

Read Revelation 5:1-14 (NIV)

The scene continues from the last chapter. God is seated on his throne and holds in his right hand a sealed scroll. John then sees a lamb that goes and takes the scroll from God. This is an event that provokes praise and worship from the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, countless millions of angelic beings, and all living creatures in the universe.

REV 5:[1]Then I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.

****What Scholars Say****

THE SEVEN-SEALED SCROLL INTRODUCED

Rev. 5:1. Chapter 4 is an introduction to the main point of chapters 4-5, that is, to introduce the **scroll** with its **seven seals**. The symbolic presentation showed a scroll or a rolled-up parchment with seven seals affixed to the side in such a way that if unrolled the seven seals would need to be broken one by one.

Alternative translation: *"The next thing I saw (John) was the One sitting on the throne had a rolled up scroll in His right hand. There was writing on both sides of it, and God had closed it firmly with seven seals (seven bits of wax)."*

Rev. 5: [2] And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" [3] But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. [4] I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. [5] Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

THE QUESTION, "WHO IS WORTHY?"

Rev. 5:2-5. John saw a mighty angel (cf. 10:1; 18:21) and heard him ask in a loud voice, **Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?** This is the first of 20 times "loud voice" occurs in Revelation. The Greek word rendered "scroll" is *biblion*, from which is derived the word "Bible."

When **no one** was found to be worthy, John **wept and wept** (lit., "kept on shedding many tears"). **One** of the 24 **elders**, however, told him not to weep, and introduced him to **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David** (cf. Isa 11:1; Rev 22:16). The elder informed John that He had **triumphed**, that is, had already achieved victory, and that He alone was **able to** break the **seals and open the scroll**.

REV 5:[6] Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

THE LAMB

Rev. 5:6. Though introduced as a "Lion" (v. 5), what John **saw** was a **Lamb** that appeared to have been slain or sacrificed. Yet the Lamb was **standing in the center of the throne**. About Him were the 24 **elders** and **the four living creatures**. The Lamb **had seven horns and seven eyes**. The Lion and the Lamb refer to Christ, with the Lamb referring to His first coming and His death and the Lion referring to His second coming and judgment of this world.

Since **horns** symbolize authority, strength and power (1 Kings 22:11), and **eyes** represent God's ability to see and know everything. The **seven horns** and **eyes** are defined as **the seven spirits of God** (I would say, seven manifestations of God) (cf. Zech 3:9; 4:10) that God has **sent out into all the earth**.

Rev. 5: [7] He (the Lamb) came and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Because He alone is worthy, the Lamb **took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne** (cf. Dan 7:9,13-14).

Rev. 5: [8] And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

THE WORSHIP OF THE LAMB

Rev. 5:8. When the scroll was **taken** by the Lamb, **the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb** in worship. Each elder **had a harp** and **golden bowls full of incense**, which was interpreted as **the prayers of the saints** (cf. Ps 141:2).

These prayers represent the saints holding up their prayers to Christ, all the prayers that the redeemed have ever prayed concerning their ultimate and final redemption, the manifestation of God's Kingdom coming to earth.

The twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp... Only the harp and the trumpet are mentioned as musical instruments in heavenly worship in the Book of Revelation.

Rev. 5: [9] And they (the 24 elders) sang a new song:

***"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because You were slain,***

***and with Your blood You purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.***

***REV 5:[10] You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth."***

I would like to read these verses from the King James:

Rev. 5: [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 (the 24 elders) 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. KJV

The twenty four elders are now described as the redeemed (of all ages). They shall reign on earth with Christ.

Rev. 5:9-10. Summary: In a **new song** the 24 elders ascribed worthiness to the Lamb **to take the scroll** and break the **seals**, stating that the Lamb had been **slain** and had **purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation**. Those He purchased with His **blood** were made a **kingdom and priests to serve our God** (Cf. 1:6), and to **reign on the earth**.

REV 5:[11] Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

Then I looked... John now describes in precise order what he saw: First the innermost throne of God, then the four living creatures, then the twenty-four elders, and now millions of angels.

Rev. 5:[12] In a loud voice they sang:

***"Worthy is the Lamb, Who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"***

The Lamb is now praised for all His qualities and attributes as Christ. He was slain for our sins, He is praised for His power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, and glory.

REV 5:[13] Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

***"To Him Who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
forever and ever!"***

REV 5:[14] The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

Rev. 5:13-14. Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them joined the heavenly crowd in words of praise to God. In this final act of praise **the four...creatures said Amen**, and the 24 **elders fell** prostrate in worship.

With the heavenly vision of chapters 4-5, the stage was set for the dramatic events to follow, the opening of the seven seals.

It is clear from this revelation that heaven is real, not imagined. Chapters 4-5 reveal the indescribable glory and infinite majesty of God in heaven.

The following chapters reveal this sovereign power of God expressed in judgment on a wicked world sunk in sin and blasphemy. Believers today have the privilege of sharing John's vision. Every believer can take the word pictures of Scripture here and anticipate the glory and the wonder of the heavenly scene that we will someday see with our own eyes. (My testimony – 1976 laying in a hospital bed dying).

****Questions****

1. What was in the hand of the one sitting on the throne in heaven? (5:1)
2. What loud proclamation did a mighty angel make? (5:2)
3. Who first came forward to open the scroll? (5:3)
4. What was John's reaction when the scroll could not be opened? (5:4)
5. What did one of the twenty-four elders say to John? (5:5)
6. Who was the only one worthy to open the scroll and its seals? (5:5)
7. What did the Lamb that John saw look like? (5:6)
8. Where was the Lamb that John saw? (5:6)
9. What did the Lamb do? (5:7)
10. How did the creatures around the throne respond to the actions of the Lamb? (5:8-9)
11. For what was the Lamb praised and worshipped? (5:9-10)
12. How many angels did John see? (5:11)
13. What were the angels doing? (5:12)

14. What were all the other living creatures doing and singing? (5:13)
15. What did Christ do for us?
16. What is the benefit of bowing down to worship God?
17. How can we serve God as His priests?

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