**Notes on Revelation 5**

* Vv. 1-4
  + “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.”
    - After the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped God (God the Father), John noticed that there was something in His hand. The Greek word describes parchment which has been rolled up (different from our idea of a “book”). John noticed two characteristics of this scroll. First, it was covered with writing. “Within and on the backside” describes the inside and outside of the scroll. The idea is that the scroll was full, with every spare inch of it written on. Second, it was sealed up. It had seven seals which prevented it from being opened. We aren’t very familiar with seals, but those who lived in the first century certainly were. In order to close a document, an important person would press down their signet into hot wax which covered its opening. This kept the contents of the document safe until the intended recipient opened it. However, to break that seal, authorization from the one who sealed it was necessary.
    - On the document in His right hand, God the Father had placed seven seals (Not along the final edge, but around the sides so that a new part of the document would be revealed each time a seal was broken). The big question is; “What was inside that scroll?” Why was it so important that God placed seven seals on it? Basically, contained within this scroll was the culmination of all of God’s plans. The reason that I know that is because it is linked to the rest of what happens in the book of Revelation. For instance, Rev. 6:1-2 says, “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.” Each time one of the seals is broken in this book, the culmination of God’s plan for the ages advances one more step. This scroll was a playbook for the end of time—the accomplishment of all of God’s promises. Daniel 9:24 says, “Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.” I won’t get into all the details of Daniel’s prophecy, but Revelation describes what will take place in the final “week” of Daniel’s prophecy (the seven-year tribulation period). Revelation shows us the end—and the opening of this scroll is what brings about “the end.”
    - A strong angel asked if there was anyone who was “worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof.” The word translated as “worthy” is the ancient Greek word for a counterbalance. First, a person would place an item of known weight (like a gold coin) on a scale. Then, they would place a counterbalance (another gold coin that appeared to be the same as the first) on the scale. If the counterbalance was legitimate, then the scales would even out. Take that imagery over to Revelation 5. On one side of the scale is the sealed scroll. It contains within it the culmination of everything that God has promised. Then the angel asks “Who is worthy to open the book?” In other words, “Who is capable of making the events within this scroll come to pass? Who can even out the scales?”
    - John records that no man was capable of opening the scroll (making the scroll come true). Heaven and earth were searched. Even hell was searched, but no one could fulfill the promises of God. No one could bring about the last chapter. This is the ultimate failure of man. Man cannot save himself. In light of such a hopelessness, John wept. He mourned. All of mankind was doomed.
* Vv. 5-7
  + “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, 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.”
    - As John wept, one of the twenty-four elders came and spoke to Him. There was no need for tears—because there was One that was worthy. The elder used two messianic titles to describe Jesus. First, he called Jesus “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Genesis 49:9-10 says, “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? 10 The sceptre 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.” Jesus is the Lion of Judah Who holds the scepter. He is the powerful King that no one would dare challenge. Second, he called Jesus “the Root of David.” Isaiah 11:10 says, “And in that day there shall be a **root of Jesse** [David’s father], which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.” Also, Jeremiah 23:5-6 says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous **Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.” Each of these refers to Jesus as the rightful descendant of David—the “Root of David.” Both titles call attention to Jesus’ right to rule as King of Kings.
    - However, when John looked up from his sorrow, he didn’t see a lion. He saw a Lamb that still bore the marks of its own death. It had been sacrificed, yet It lived again. It had seven horns. Horns were a symbol of power (I Kings 22:11), and the number seven of perfection/completion. When you put them together, these horns are a symbol of Jesus’ omnipotence (He has all power). In a similar fashion, the seven eyes are a symbol of Jesus’ omniscience—the Holy Spirit He possesses which goes throughout the whole world (He sees/knows everything). John watched as Jesus came and took the scroll from the right hand of His Father. He was worthy—the only One.
* Vv. 8-10
  + “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.”
    - The song of the elders tells us why Jesus was worthy to take the scroll. He was omniscient, but His omniscience didn’t make Him worthy. He was omnipotent, but His omnipotence didn’t make Him worthy. It was Jesus’ sacrifice that made Him worthy. Without Jesus’ death on the cross, no one would have been able to open the book. God wouldn’t have been able to fulfill His promises. Jesus’ blood made those promises possible.
    - In light of what Jesus had done, the elders fell down before Him again. They sang about Him. They said that He was worthy. They praised Him for what He had done for them. He had died for them. He had purchased them with His blood. He had changed them from filthy sinners into righteous rulers. How could they not praise Him? Perhaps a better question is; how can we not praise Him? Has He done any less for us?
    - These elders used everything that they possessed to worship Jesus. They prostrated their bodies before Him. In one hand, they had a harp for creating music for Jesus. In the other hand, they offered believer’s prayers as incense to Jesus. They lifted their voices in song to Jesus. How did they do it? How did they play the harp while singing, falling down, and holding incense in the other hand? I don’t know. Perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised to find supernatural worship in a supernatural place. The point remains. Every cell, atom, possession, and ability they had was used for worshipping Jesus—and He deserved it.
* Vv. 11-14
  + “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.”
    - As the elders sang to Jesus, an innumerable host of angels joined them. Ten thousand times ten thousand equals 100 million angels. On top of that, John said that there were “thousands of thousands.” That’s a lot of angels! To me, it seems like John wasn’t trying to give us a specific number, but to express the sheer magnitude of their assembly. There were so many angels that they couldn’t possibly have been numbered.
    - What kind of voices do you think angels have? Throughout the Bible, angels are presented as terrifying, powerful beings. The first thing they usually say to any man is “fear not.” If one angel spoke, I imagine that their voice would be greater than the strongest voice that we have ever heard. Can you imagine what 100 million plus angels sound like when they speak together? Surely, the result must be overwhelming. In unison they shouted, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”
    - At this point, John heard all creation join together with the angels. Every creature, every critter, every fish, every bacteria said, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.” When I looked at this incredible scene of worship, the first thought that came to my head was, “That’s what it looks like when everything is as it should be—all creation doing what it was designed to do.” Then I looked at v. 14, and I realized that that’s exactly what the four beasts were thinking as well. They simply said, “Amen.” All of creation was worshipping Jesus, and all was right with the world. Is “all right with the world” in your life? Are you worshipping Him with everything you’ve got?