

THE REVELATION

APRIL 21, 2024

Chapter 5

10. The Scroll in Heaven (5:1)

Rev 5:1 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.

And then John noticed something extremely special, a book “in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne” and it was covered with writing on every side of every page. He also noticed that the book was secured shut with seven seals. It was in the right hand of God. It must have been an important book. We should say it is an important book because it is the title deed to the glorious mansions in the presence of God for all who believe in the LORD as Savior. This book holds the future of all the lives of the faithful whose names are within its pages. This book holds the determination of eternal life or eternal death for every human who has lived on earth since the creation of Adam and Eve until the birth of the last baby before the Great White Throne Judgment. This book with seven seals is none other than the Book of Life. But it was sealed up. Who could open it and reveal its contents?

11. The Strong Angel in Heaven (5:2)

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?"

The strong angel wanted to know the answer to the same question we have presented in the previous verse, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” Who has the heavenly right to open that Book of Life? Who is worthy to grant eternal life?

12. The Search in Heaven (5:3)

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.

The search took place in heaven and on earth. Just stop to think about all the tyrants of the world down through history who would have loved to have had the right to open the seals of this book and have had the power to control mankind. Just in recent history, Osama ben Laden, Saddam Hussein, Adolf Hitler and Kaiser Wilhelm would have given everything they had to take a whack at trying to open the seals on that book and garner the power associated with each. None of them were worthy because they were all evil. What about the hall of faith listed in the Bible in Hebrews chapter 11. There was Noah. Surely, he was worthy! No, no, he had a drinking problem. Oh, there was Abraham! No, he was not worthy; he had a lying problem. What about Lot? No, he was not worthy because he did not see anything wrong with homosexuality. How about Jacob? Surely Jacob was worthy! No, he was a thief. Perhaps Moses? No, he could not always follow directions. So, what about the more modern godly people? What about Mother Teresa, Billy Graham, George Whitfield, Charles Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Luther Rice, General William Booth, or Pope Paul? No, no, they were godly, but

not one of them as a sinner saved by grace would dare attempt such a foolish task for not one of them was worthy enough. The search was made in heaven and on earth, not one human or one angel or creature of any kind was worthy.

13. The Weeping in Heaven (5:4)

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

How long did the search go on? It must have seemed like an eternity to John. From his perspective it was a hopeless task. He cried. He cried in heaven. Tears fell in heaven. Not tears of joy but tears of hopeless sorrow. They were not tears of the redeemed from earth who had made the transition to their heavenly home; no, they were tears of a man who was given the blessing to see heaven before he made that transition. Those who have gone on will not weep because they know the full story of all the rest of history and they understand. These tears were being shed by a man who was still looking at life with partial knowledge and bad worldly eyesight. Paul said it was like looking at life in a mirror that was hazy.

14. The Lion in Heaven (5:5)

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."

Do you ever wish you knew the name of someone, but you really know you never will, at least while in this life? What was the name of the *old man*? We only know him as one of the elders created by Jesus to sit on one of the twenty-four thrones for all eternity. He knew Who was worthy! Yes, he did. He had been worshiping the Worthy One since he was created. "Behold," the elder said. *Pay strict attention to this* is what "Behold" means. He then showed John "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," the sinless One worthy to "open the book and its seven seals."

John was Jewish and when this *old man* pronounced the name of "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David," it must have brought great joy to his heart and mind. One of my mentors said the following about this.

What a chord the mention of the Lion must have struck in John's soul, for that was the kind of Messiah the Jews had always wanted and expected. They had crucified Jesus because He was too tame for them. They had wanted a king who would smash the power of Rome and make Jerusalem capital of a new world empire. The last thing they wanted was One meek and lowly, gentle and kind. At last, that longed-for militant Messiah is to be unveiled, David's Son and David's Lord.¹

15. The Lamb in Heaven (5:6)

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.

John looked again and there, between the throne of God and the thrones of the elders stood a Lamb, not a Lion as John might have expected. The interesting thing that we must ask is "How in

¹ John Phillips Commentary Series, The - The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Revelation: An Expository Commentary.

the world did John miss this Lamb when he was describing the throne room?” The Lamb was there all the time. He had been there since He returned from doing His work on earth to provide salvation for every man, woman, boy and girl. He had been there since John last saw Him on the Mount of Olives, raising His hands and ascending into the Heavens, promising to return in the same way one day! John knew all about this Lamb; he had mentioned him twice in his Gospel that landed him in exile on the isle of Patmos (John 1:29 & 36). From this point on in REVELATION John will mention Him 28 times. He is the Lamb because He came to earth to be sacrificed to save; the next time He comes it will be to rule as King of all. John may have been expecting the Lion, but he was satisfied with the Lamb. Then John realized it had “seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.” We should remember that the seven Spirits of God were symbolized as the “seven lamps of fire burning before the throne.” We will soon be told that these seven are the seven angels that will blow the trumpets and pour the bowls of wrath on the earth. In other words, the “seven horns and seven eyes” on the Lamb of God represent the authority granted to the seven angels to do their assignments in the revelation of the Second Coming of Jesus and the duty to watch and report the results to the throne room for all the creatures, elders and angelic chorus to rejoice and give praise to God the Father and God the Son, the Lamb of God.

16. The Exchange in Heaven (5:7)

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

And so, we come to the glorious exchange in heaven – beyond all earthly imagination. John saw the rehearsal of the future story begin. Jesus, the Lamb of God, moved to the throne of God the Father and took out of His hand the Book of Life, sealed with seven seals.

17. The Adoration in Heaven (5:8)

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

All of heaven’s creatures knew the importance of the exchange between the Father and the Lamb. It must have been an eruption of joy joined with the grand worship in the throne room of God. Both the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell to their knees and prostrated themselves before Jesus when He took the Book of Life from the Father. The harps of the four living creatures and the harps of the twenty-four elders were placed on the crystal sea and so were their “golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” It was their way of acknowledging that Jesus was the only One worthy of taking the book and opening the seals. The incense in the golden bowls will be myrrh and frankincense. In the Old Testament, these two incenses were considered the prayers of the Israelites (Psalm 141:2). The odor of the burning incense in these golden bowls represented the prayers of all the saints of all the ages. In all the ages, the saints have been looking forward to this day. What a hallelujah day it will be when Jesus begins to open the Book of Life one seal at a time which will inaugurate His soon coming return to earth to rid it of sin, sorrow and sadness by conquering as King of all the kings and lords of the world. And so, the prayers of all the saints of all the ages will be answered by Him.

18. The New Song in Heaven (5:9-10)

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation."¹⁰ "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

With the exchange of the Book of Life from the hand of the Father to the hand of the Son, a “new song” was introduced. In reality, it was not a “new song” at all because it had been written before the foundation of the earth and before the creation of all things. It was just the time for that ancient hymn to be sung for the first time in heaven. Even the words in the song were not truly new because they tell the story of Jesus and His redemptive work. Verse 10 in this song was delivered first to John in Revelation 1:6.

Rev 1: 6 and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

John had already told the Churches that they had a special place in Jesus’ plan. Together, they were part of His kingdom. It was not something still to take place in the future, it was already done. John’s selected word was *basileia*. The word “kingdom” does fit as a meaning in this context, but we ought to think about it with a larger meaning such as a *royal power*. Why? Because we are the children of the King, living under His care, in His kingdom, whether in heaven or eventually back on earth. That sense of royalty becomes clearer when we see that the original Greek actually says we are a *basileia hierous* or translated *kingdom of priests*. By putting the kingdom and priest together, we see the royalty. As Christians we are a kingdom of priests, or, as Peter said, “a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). Every Christian has a place as a royal priest to God the Father which is the title of the first Person of the Trinity. When John says, “to His God and Father,” he means that Jesus recognizes God with the title of “Father.” Jesus will hold the title of “God the Son” and the Holy Spirit will hold the title of “God the Spirit.” All three make up the one essence of God in three persons. We as priests in Jesus’ kingdom are in fact priests to Jesus’ God Whom He recognized as the Father.

But the last part of that sentence says, “and they will reign upon the earth.” That phrase had already been spoken, too, to one of the churches (Revelation 3:21). It was in the letter to the pathetic Church of Laodicea where not one congregant was a true believer before the letter was delivered from John. Even at this point in the story, the Church at Laodicea is still in trouble because it has not received this letter yet. It will not be delivered to them for several days if not months at this point. And yet, the promise to Laodicea is brought forth to all believers in this chapter; each believer will rule and reign with Jesus when He returns at His Second Coming to become the King of all.

19. The Choir in Heaven (5:11-14)

Rev 5:11 Then 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,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."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."¹⁴ And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

After just one round of the “new song” all of heaven erupted in verse. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” And then John heard the rehearsal of what will take place in the future when the Lamb takes the Book of Life from the hand of the Father. He heard all creatures of heaven and earth say, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” It is praise to God the Father and God the Son, the Worthy Lamb. “Amen” said the four living creatures. “Amen” means *true or truly*. And of course, we see the *old men*, “the elders,” doing what they were created by the LORD to do. In the throne room they fell to their knees and gave worship for the righteous acts of God.