

Hurstbourne Baptist Church; November 22, 2020
Sermon Notes: Revelation 5:1-14
“The Theme of Heaven’s Praises”

Is Anyone Worthy? (5:1-4)

- The central question of Revelation 5: “Who is **worthy** to open the scroll and break its seals?”
- The answer to this central question is provided in verse 3: “**No one** in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll” (5:3).
- “The scroll, as we shall see, must be opened for God’s purposes to be realized in history and for humans to be redeemed from their evil. Hence John **weeps** “loudly” when the scroll cannot be opened (cf. Isa. 29:11). A sense of hopelessness and despair and grief grips him. John wants the reader to feel how bleak and desperate life would be if the scroll remained sealed” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 606).

Jesus is Worthy! (5:5-7)

- One of the elders said, “Weep no more; behold, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals” (5:5)
- “And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a **Lamb** standing as though it had been slain...” (5:6).
- “The Lamb was indeed slain but is now standing. The standing of the Lamb represents Jesus’ resurrection and **victory** over death. Yes, he was slain for the sake of his people, but he now stands in the midst of the throne in **triumph**” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 607).
- “He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne” (5:7).

Jesus is Worshipped (5:8-14)

- When Jesus took the scroll, the elders and the creatures fell down and **worshipped**.
- Verse 9 specifically explains why the Lamb is worthy of worship: because He is the **slain** Lamb.
 - Man was enslaved to sin (1:5), and Jesus “ransomed” by His blood a “people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation” (5:9).
 - According to verse 10, Jesus not only ransomed us, but he made us a “kingdom of priests to our God” and we shall “reign on earth” (5:10).

Application

- **Worship** is our proper response to Revelation 5. Jesus is the theme of heaven’s praises. He should be the theme of our praises today. No matter how imperfect our earthly situation is, Revelation 5 reminds us that we have been ransomed! Our sins are forgiven! We belong to God! Because of Jesus – the slain Lamb – we have unshakeable hope and a certain future.

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Supplemental Quotes & Commentary: Revelation 5:1-14
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- The scroll, as we shall see, represents redemptive history and God’s purposes for the entire creation, especially human beings. Still, the scroll is securely sealed with seven seals, and thus what is written on the scroll will not take place unless the seals are broken” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 605-606).
- “The answer to the question is now given, and it is a crushing disappointment: No one is able to open the scroll or look at its contents (cf. Phil. 2:10). And no one, as John emphasizes it, truly means *no one*. There is no heavenly being, no angel, who can open the scroll. Nor is there anyone on earth who can do so. Nor is there anyone under the earth, in the realm of the dead, who can open it” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 605-606).
- “The scroll, as we shall see, must be opened for God’s purposes to be realized in history and for humans to be redeemed from their evil. Hence John weeps “loudly” when the scroll cannot be opened (cf. Isa. 29:11). A sense of hopelessness and despair and grief grips him. John wants the reader to feel how bleak and desperate life would be if the scroll remained sealed” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 606).
- “The Lion who is also the Lamb approaches the throne and takes the scroll from God’s right hand. He has the authority to take the scroll from God because of his death and resurrection. We see against that the key unlocking history is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (Schreiner, “Revelation” in *Expositor’s Commentary*, 608).
- **From Last Week:** “Since then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:1-2).
- **From Last Week:** “Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody, of East Northfield, is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now” (Moody, *Life of D. L. Moody*, ii).
- **From Last Week:** “If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. The Apostles themselves, who set on foot the conversion of the Roman empire, the great men who built up the Middle Ages, the English Evangelicals who abolished the Slave Trade, all left their mark on Earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with Heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this. Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at Earth and you will get neither” (Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 118).