

Revelation 5.1-14

"He Alone is Worthy"

Chs. 4 & 5 – DOOR OPEN - See into Throne Room of Sovereign God

Ch. 4 > Awesome Scene of God's Glory > Worthy of All Praise > Not Finished

Could have been written by any other Jew > but John is a Christian Jew

Revelation of Jesus Christ

Risen from Death, Residing in Church, Ruling the World, Returning in Glory

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|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Problems in the World | 2. Purpose found in Christ |
| 3. Power of the Cross | 4. Praise from the World |

1. Problems in the World

Many FEEL HOPELESS & HELPLESS, Victims of Forces Beyond their Control

a. No Direction > Truth? Purpose of Life? Is there ANY Meaning?

APOSTLE JOHN sees NO ANSWER FROM HEAVEN > v. 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.*"

SCROLL - DESTINY OF THE WORLD - GOD'S COMPLETE PLAN

Normally Scrolls written only on Inside > Fullness of God's Purposes

"All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."
 Psalm 139.16

Seven Seals > God's Plan is Bound SHUT, Unknown, Unknowable

"When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

Psalm 11.3

GOD'S MARTYRS wait for His Purpose to Unfold: "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?"

Revelation 6.10

b. No Leaders > Going NOWHERE > NO ONE to TAKE US There!

vs. 2,3 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.

NOT asking Who's WILLING > Long Line of Political LEADERS to Volunteer Throughout All Centuries, From All Continents > from Alexander to Mao Zedung

GLOBAL ANNOUNCEMENT > Eager Search for ANYONE WORTHY
But No Angel in Heaven > No Saint on Earth > No Prophet in the World Beyond

"Human knowledge and wisdom cannot probe the depths of God's purposes. In our information age, it is easy for us to think the human mind is capable of knowing all things...we think we can know all and do all." M. Robert Mulholland, Jr

Not lack of Physical Strength but Moral Incompetence > Consequence of Sin

"There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Romans 3.10-12

Everyone has DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS > Skeletons Hidden in their Closets

c. No Hope > Yearn for PEACE > LIVES FILLED WITH TURMOIL

v. 4 "I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside."

TEARS > World has NO PURPOSE - NO FUTURE - OUT OF CONTROL

"you were separate from Christ...without hope and without God in the world"

Ephesians 2.12

"If the scroll is not opened, then no protection for God's children in the hours of bitter trial; no judgments upon the persecuting world; no ultimate triumph for believers; no new heaven and earth; no future inheritance!" William Hendriksen

Isaiah's STRONG MESSAGE to Faithless Judah: "Be stunned and amazed, blind yourselves and be sightless; be drunk, but not from wine, stagger, but not from beer. The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep: He has sealed your eyes (the prophets); he has covered your heads (the seers). For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say to him, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," he will answer, "I don't know how to read."... once more I will astound these people with wonder upon wonder; the wisdom of the wise will perish, the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish." Isaiah 29.9-14

“We do not need Christ to tell us that the world is full of troubles. But we do need his explanation of history if its troubles are not to be meaningless.”

Michael Wilcock

2. Purpose found in Christ

God’s Purpose NOT Defined by Narrow Parameters of our Plans & Purposes

v. 5 “Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep!"

ONE ALONE Gives = Right DIRECTION – True LEADERSHIP – SOLID HOPE

ONLY ONE CAN STOP TEARS OF DESPERATION

Stop Weeping > Look to Incarnate Son > Now Enthroned in Glory > Overcome

a. Crown v. 5 “See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah”

Abe’s Grandson Jacob’s Blessed 4th Son Judah: “You are a lion's cub, O Judah...The scepter will not depart from Judah...until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his.” Genesis 49.9,10

Promise FULFILLED in Mary’s Son > Angel told her: “You will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David...his kingdom will never end.” Luke 1.31-33

Jesus Christ is FOCAL POINT of Human History > All Time ordered by Him
All is ‘B.C’ Before Him or ‘A.D.’ Annum Dominis ‘in the year of our Lord’

Some Modern HISTORIANS Cannot Understand > Explain > or even Admit
CHRIST is TURNING POINT of the Human Story > He Opens God’s Scroll

“He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Colossians 1.17

b. Creator v. 5 “...the Root of David...” Son of God and Son of David

Root of David > After David AND Before him > Pre-existence Eternal Son of God

“A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse” Isaiah 11.1

True King of line of David Comes > Judge with Righteousness > Era of Peace

Through Incarnation > Root of David becomes the Lion of Judah

v. 6 “He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.”

7 Horns > Horn = Power > 7 Horns > Total Power > Omnipotent Lamb
 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” Matthew 28.18

7 Eyes > Divine Omniscience: nothing hid from him > He Sees and Knows All
 Each of 7 Letters to Churches in chapters 2 and 3: Jesus said ‘I know ...’
 Penetrating Gaze of Him whose Eyes are like a Flame of Fire

7 Spirits of God > Fullness of Spirit of God Himself > “in midst of throne”
 Not PHOTOGRAPH of Heaven > Symbolic description of God’s Sovereignty

“To scrutinize in a literalistic and systematic manner some of the author’s metaphors, which are piled on one another, results in contorted and confusing pictures. For instance, it is inappropriate to question how a lamb can take a book out of someone’s hand, open it, and read it. Or how each elder is able to simultaneously hold a harp (and play it?) and bowls of incense. Perhaps the book is a general symbol, and, when each seal is opened, aspects of the revealing symbolism of the contents are released.” G.K. Beale

c. Crucified v. 6 “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain”

WHAT A SHOCK! > Instead of Roaring Lion, John sees a Wounded Lamb!
 Jews were SHOCKED that God sent Lion of Judah to be Lamb of God

Death of Lamb > Heart of Jewish Identity > People of the Passover in Egypt
 Jesus is New Passover Lamb > Leads the True Exodus of God’s People

“Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” 1 Corinthians 5.7

“the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” 1 Peter 1.19

Center of the Celestial Scene > not a Lion, but a Lamb! Lamb w/ 7 Horns – 7 Eyes
 Bearing Wounds of Sacrificial Suffering - Standing Ready for Action.
 Central theme of NT > Victory through Sacrifice > The Lion is the Lamb

v. 5 “He is *able to open the scroll* and its seven seals.”

v. 9 And they sang a new song: “You are *worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals*, because you were slain”

New Mercy calls forth a New Song of Gratitude and Praise

New Song NOT never before Sung > New Version of Existing Truth
 Deliverance Not from Egypt > but from Kingdom of Death and Darkness
 Opening of Scroll > Disclosure of God's Purpose > is Cross of Jesus
 Blood of God's Passover Lamb > Sets His People ETERNALLY FREE

Americans are Proud of their EAGLE > British their LION > Russians their BEAR
 Symbol of GOD'S KINGDOM > LAMB > Slain Lamb > 29 x's in Book of Revel.
 Jesus, the Messiah, is God > in a Distressing Disguise—a Crucified God!

“The praise of the Lamb is new not just at the beginning (so to speak) of eternity, but throughout eternity. It is a song that will never grow old, because the wonder and joy of this salvation will never fade, because, indeed, in the new heaven and earth no one and nothing becomes old. Newness is the hallmark of the renewed creation in which there is no staleness, no slowing down, and no wearing out. The Lord's redeemed people are evermore new creatures for whom the new has come. As citizens of the New Jerusalem they hear the Lord's new name, and they rejoice forever in the realization of the Creator's proclamation, ‘Behold, I make all things new!’”
 Philip Edgcumbe Hughes

3. Power of the Cross

a. Cost v. 9 “with your blood you purchased men for God”

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
 John 3.16

INCALCULABLE PRICE OF THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF GOD

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”
 2 Corinthians 8.9

“A Christian is a person amazed at the fact that he is forgiven” Martin Lloyd-Jones

Boy in Sea-side Village - Watched Ships Sail out to the Sea
 Built his OWN Little Boat > Sails with Joy > ONE DAY Boat Lost at Sea
 LATER Sees Damaged Boat in Window of 2nd Hand Store > Asks for it Back
 “No, it is mine now - if you want it - you have to buy it!” > He worked & Saved
 Bought it Back - “Now you are mine twice - I MADE YOU & BOUGHT YOU”

b. Goal > He DIED for us, Now we must LIVE for Him

vs. 9,10 “you purchased men *for God*...to be a kingdom and priests to *serve our God*”

Corporately: Believers are a Kingdom > Individually: They are Priests to God

God’s Kingdom & his Priests > Restored & Fulfilled Covenant Community

“He has freed us from our sins by the shedding of his blood for us. He has made us his kingdom and his priests”
Revelation 1.5,6

“You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”
1 Corinthians 6.19,20

Young Man > Died in Missionary Service before the age of 30:

“As long as I see anything to be done for God, life is worth having; but O how vain and unworthy it is to live for any lower end!”
David Brainerd

WE HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH OUR BELOVED LAMB

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”

Revelation 19.7,8

BY GOD’S GRACE > MAY WE HAVE SOMETHING FITTING TO WEAR!

c. Extent > the Invitation is Extended FAR and WIDE around the Globe

v. 9 “with your blood you purchased men for God from *every tribe and language and people and nation*”

Jesus Fulfills Covenant Promise to Abraham: “all peoples on earth will be blessed through you”
Genesis 12.3

Global Redemption >

Men, Women, boys and girls from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation

Universal Church: No National, Political, Cultural, or Racial Boundaries

“For those who think Jesus is a ‘white man’s god’ or a ‘western god’ ...one day their voices will be drowned out by the universal praise of the universe’ Lord and King. Heaven’s courts will ring with united, universal praise! There will not even be a shadow of racial prejudice, division, or even tension. Today it is a joy as well as a responsibility to reflect the praise that one day will resound throughout the universe by maintaining the unity within the multinational, multicultural, multiracial body of Christ.”

Anne Graham Lotz

Some have used Doctrine of God’s Sovereignty as Excuse NOT to Serve Him

APOSTLE JOHN > Opposite Reaction > Sees Dramatic Evidence of God’s Plan Gets NEW ZEAL to SERVE and even SUFFER: “I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus”

Revelation 1.9

Like Isaiah saw THRICE Holy God – High & Lifted Up > “Here am I, send me!”

God’s Sovereignty > SUPREME ENCOURAGEMENT to Serve Him
Hopeless task if Depended on Man / Dead in Sin / Cannot come, Will Not Come

CONFIDENCE IN GOD WHO CAN RAISE THE DEAD

“I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.”

John 5.25

4. Praise from the World

a. Preeminence “in everything he might have the supremacy” Colossians 1.18

v. 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.”

THRONE IS CENTER OF HEAVEN - OF ALL UNIVERSE

Everything / Everyone - take their place around throne / BOWING DOWN

Mighty Lion - Massive Ox - Magnificent Man - Majestic Eagle

“For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

Romans 11.36

b. Prayers Golden bowls filled with Incense > Prayers of God's People

v. 8 "Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."

"Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning...again at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come."

Exodus 30.7,8

During Incense Offering in Temple > People were Outside Praying

"Zechariah...was on duty...as priest before God...to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside."

Luke 1.8-10

Impt Prayer of Jews > Deliverance from Bondage & Restoration of Kingdom
NEW Song > in the Lamb > Prayers have been Answered > Fully and Finally
Zechariah's Son > John the Baptist announced: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1.29

God's People DESPISED on Earth > but their PRAYERS in Very Presence of God
People > Even Believers, DOUBT Purpose of Prayer > Carried in Golden Bowls

Much of 20th Cent > Believers Prayed for those Behind man-made 'Iron Curtain'
God heard PRAYERS > from BOTH sides of that Curtain of Atheism
Today we from Whole WORLD > WORSHIP Jesus in Former Soviet Territory
PRAY in 21st Cent > man-made 'Iron Curtain' of ISLAM would SOON FALL

c. Praise > HEAVEN'S ELECTORAL MANDATE

vs. 11-14 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. 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!" 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, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

“With the handing of the scroll to the Lamb we enter into one of the greatest scenes of universal adoration anywhere recorded. Nowhere else in the literature of worship will one find a scene of such unrestrained praise and adoration.”

Robert H. Mounce

Corrie ten Boom > DUTCH Christian Woman > in Nazi Concentration Camp
For Protecting Jews during World War 2 > Came out Alive to Testify for Jesus
Spoke all Around World > Many PRAISED HER > for Life of Valiant Courage
Took Each Compliment like FLOWER > End of Day gave her BOUQUET to God

Adoration of the Lamb > Moves out in Ever Widening Circles
Worship of God the Creator AND Worship of the Lamb the Redeemer

v. 11 “thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand”

100,000,000,000,000 (10,000 x 10,000 x 1,000 x 1,000) > INFINITE NUMBER!!

“Absolutely Incomprehensible # for 1st C Reader” > or this 21st C Reader!

Praise of Entire Created Order to the One who Sits on the Throne and the Lamb

Homage of Praise & Worship by Every Created Being > Harmony of the Whole
God the Creator of all, and to the Lamb > Incarnate Son of God and Redeemer
Sharing the Same PRAISE > BECAUSE they Share Same NATURE
POWER – WEALTH – WISDOM – STRENGTH – HONOR – GLORY - PRAISE

Concludes with Amen > All of Creation: “So Shall it Be!”

“Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.” Psalm 150.6

“What individual do you know who has set himself or herself against Christ? What school or business? What organization? What nation?...Sooner or later, those who set themselves against Him will find themselves on their faces before Him, because God gives you and me the right to choose Jesus as Savior – or reject Him. But He gives us no right to choose whether we will acknowledge Him as Lord. One day, everyone will acknowledge Him, whether they want to or not, and the entire universe will resound with thunderous praise of the One Who alone is worthy as the sovereign Lord and the all-sufficient Lamb.”

Anne Graham Lotz

Revelation 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.
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."
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.
7. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.
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.
9. And they 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.
10. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."
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.
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!"
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, for ever and ever!"
14. The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.