

6. The Lamb and the Scroll with Seven Seals (Revelation 5)

This section introduces the scroll and the Lamb, thus placing the Lamb in the very midst of heaven's glory and power. Now in addition to the Almighty God and the Holy Spirit, the Lamb, the son of God, is on the throne of God. The vision of John now reveals Christ in all his awesome power.

The Scroll with the Seven Seals (Revelation 5:1-5)

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."

The scroll was in the hand of him who sat upon the throne. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, the word here derives from *biblos*, a scroll, or book, a word used to designate various books of the Bible. In Rev 5:1-9, the scroll represents the revelation of God's purposes and counsels concerning the world. This is also true of the little scroll in Rev 10:8. Although the word is always rendered little scroll in Revelation 10:2, 9-12, there is no real reason to so render it.

John wept because no one was able to open the scroll. Then one of the elders said to him, "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 Root of David is the Christ as the angel told Mary: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke 1:32-33). Isaiah 11:10-11 also reveals this eternal connection: "10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious. 11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the remnant that is left of his people . . . Paul quotes Isaiah in Rom 15:12: "12 And again, Isaiah says,

"The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
the Gentiles will hope in him."

The triumphant Christ is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.

Angels Exalt the Lamb (Revelation 5:6-14)

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.

Then John saw the Lamb, the sacrificed Son of God. The victory of the Lamb fulfills the expectation of the centuries. John the Baptist recognized the Lamb immediately: "29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29. The Ethiopian eunuch was puzzling over this very idea just prior to his conversion by Philip in Acts 8:32:

"32 The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

*"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

Paul emphatically identified Christ as the Lamb in 1 Cor 5:7-8: "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed."

Peter connected the blood of the Lamb to our redemption in 1 Peter 1:18-19:

"18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

The Lamb was standing in the center of the throne of God fulfilling Paul's description:

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. Eph 1:19-23

The Lamb has the sevenfold spirit of God in his seven eyes, the power of which reaches throughout the world. This an affirmation the angels statement in Zechariah 4:10, "These seven are the eyes of the LORD, which range throughout the earth." Jesus describes this power in John 3:34-35: "For the

one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands."

The Lamb came and took the scroll, and the four living creatures and the elders fell down before the Lamb. They had harps and golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. We find in Revelation 8:4 that the prayers of the saints go before God. The new song tells us that this is the last and notable day of the Lord:

- The Lamb is worthy to take the scroll and open the seals revealing the mighty triumph of the Lamb and the Almighty God.
- He was slain and purchased men for God from all tribes, languages, and people.
- He made them to be a kingdom and priest to serve our God (Revelation 1:6).

The number of angels heard by John was innumerable. Some versions say that there were myriads of myriads. The millions of angels encircled the throne and the elders and the living creatures and sang their song of praise. To the angels' song were added the voices of the entire creation:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"

The living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

This is truly the advent of the great and wonderful Day of the Lord. What a fulfillment of Paul's statement in Phil 2:9-11

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.