

The Book of Revelation

Lesson 5: The Lamb and the Scroll -- Revelation 5:1-14

We are still in the throne room. The thunder is still rolling, the four living creatures are still crying "Holy, holy, holy," the elders are still casting down their crowns. And then John notices something in the right hand of the One seated on the throne. "I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals" (5:1). A document, full to the margins, locked shut with seven seals. This is the book of God's purposes for history, the unfolding plan that will carry the suffering church through to final victory. It holds the answer to every question a persecuted believer asks: Where is this all going? Will evil have the last word? Does God still reign over what is happening to us? And it is sealed.

Then comes a cry that stops heaven cold. "A mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" (5:2). And no one answers. "No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it" (5:3). John, who has just seen the door open into glory, now begins to weep. "I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it" (5:4). It is one of the most human moments in the book. If no one can open the scroll, then God's purposes stay locked, history has no meaning, and the suffering of the saints has no resolution. John weeps the tears of every believer who has ever wondered whether anyone is in charge of the story.

And then an elder touches his shoulder. "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll" (5:5). The Lion has won. But when John turns to see this conquering Lion, he sees something else entirely. "I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain" (5:6). A Lamb, not a lion. Standing, yet bearing the marks of slaughter. Alive, yet pierced. This is the great surprise at the center of Revelation and at the center of all reality: the Lion conquers as the slain Lamb. The victory of God comes not through crushing force but through a sacrifice that looks like defeat. The marks of death are still on Him, and He is standing, alive, worthy, and already at the throne.

The Lamb steps forward and takes the scroll, and heaven erupts. A new song breaks out: "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation" (5:9). Then the circle widens, thousands upon thousands of angels, then every creature in heaven and earth and sea, until the whole universe is singing to the Lamb. Here is the comfort the trembling church needed and we need: history is not locked. It is in the nail-pierced hands of the One who already conquered, who already reigns, who is worthy now. You do not have to wait for some future age to find out whether the Lamb wins. He has already won, and He holds the scroll.

Group Discussion: John weeps because the scroll, the meaning and outcome of history, seems locked shut and no one is worthy to open it. Where do people today carry that same fear that

the story has no one in charge, and how does “a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” answer it?

Personal Reflection: Name one part of your life or our world that feels like a sealed scroll to you right now, a situation whose outcome you cannot see or control. What would change this week if you truly believed the slain and risen Lamb already holds it in His hands?

Read Revelation 5:1–14

Study Questions

1. John sees “a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals” (5:1), and weeps when no one is found worthy to open it (5:4). Reading the scroll as God’s purposes for history, why is it such a crisis that no one can open it, and what does the search say about who is competent to govern and unfold the destiny of the world?
2. John “began to weep loudly” when the scroll seemed locked shut (5:4). What sealed scroll in your own life, some outcome you cannot see or control, tends to bring you closest to John’s tears, and where do you take that fear?
3. The elder announces “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered” (5:5), yet John turns and sees “a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain” (5:6). Why does the conquering Lion appear as a slaughtered Lamb, and what does this reveal about how Christ actually won His victory (compare Genesis 49:9–10; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29)?

4. The world measures victory by force, dominance, and the power to crush. The Lamb conquered by being slain. Where are you tempted to reach for the world's kind of power (control, retaliation, self-protection), and what would it look like to trust the way of the Lamb instead?

5. The Lamb is "standing, as though it had been slain," with "seven horns and seven eyes" (5:6). Read symbolically (slain yet alive and standing, seven horns of complete power, seven eyes of complete knowledge by the Spirit), what does this picture say about the present authority and reign of the crucified and risen Christ?

6. The Lamb still bears the marks of slaughter even in the glory of heaven, standing alive at the throne. How does it comfort you that the One who reigns over your life is not a distant, untouched ruler but the One who was wounded for you and still carries those wounds?

7. "He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne" (5:7), and heaven responds with worship. What does it mean that the Lamb takes the scroll, and how does this act show that history's plan is now being carried out by the One who was slain and raised?

8. When the Lamb takes the scroll, the elders fall down and the whole creation breaks into song (5:8–13). When you consider that the slain Lamb holds your future, does it move you, as it moved heaven, to worship? What in your heart tends to keep that song from rising, and what would help it break out?

9. Heaven sings the new song, “Worthy are you... for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth” (5:9–10). On what ground is the Lamb declared worthy, and how does this present, slain-yet-standing, already-reigning Lamb, with a people already made “a kingdom and priests,” answer any teaching that Christ’s reign is postponed until a future earthly age (compare Acts 2:33–36; 1 Corinthians 15:24–26; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:5–6)?

10. Look back across the whole vision, the sealed scroll, John’s tears, the conquering Lion who is the slain Lamb, the new song, the whole universe worshipping. Name one specific way the Lord is using this chapter to form you, to move you from fear toward trust in the Lamb who reigns, or from the world’s way of power toward the Lamb’s way of sacrifice.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Genesis 49:9–10, the lion of Judah to whom the scepter belongs; Isaiah 53:4–7, the suffering servant led like a lamb to the slaughter; John 1:29, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; 1 Peter 1:18–19, ransomed by the precious blood of

Christ, a lamb without blemish; 1 Peter 2:9, a chosen people, a royal priesthood, declaring His praises; Revelation 1:5-6, He freed us by His blood and made us a kingdom and priests to God.

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