

1. **Introduction:** In a vision John was transported to the throne room of God. A sealed scroll was revealed in the right hand of the Father. Heaven and earth were searched for someone worthy of opening the scroll. One of the 24 elders said, ***“the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”***
2. **Revelation 5:6:** ***And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.***
 - John turned to look at what the elders had seen expecting to see a majestic lion, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. But what he sees is ***“a lamb, standing as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God.”***
 - Think of it, the expected lion, mightiest of predators was replaced by a weak, helpless, lamb. That is the truth. Jesus conquered not by force but through sacrificial love, not by annihilating His enemies, but by sacrificing Himself in suffering love. The Jews expected Messiah to come like a conquering lion judging and overthrowing Roman oppressors.
 - But He didn’t come into the world that way.
3. **John 3:17:** ***“For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”***
 - The OT understanding that Messiah would be a great warrior like David was not true in a military sense. Messiah did not attack Roman power but attacked sin and death. Neither of those targets were amenable to defeat through military power.
 - Messiah came, not as a great military warrior, but as the Lamb of God. His mission was to conquer sin and death through willing sacrifice of Himself to pay the death penalty due the sins of those who believe. He conquered through His great redeeming love.
 - The great victory over the forces of evil occurred when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected 3 days later. In general, it is true that great victories require sacrifice.
 - So, John sees a lamb in the place of the expected lion of Judah. The lamb, standing and clearly alive, appeared to have been slain (sacrificial lambs were slain by cutting their throat). The cut to the throat was what John noticed. The lamb had been restored to life.
 - As the incarnate Son of God (the God-Man), Jesus had the necessary divine power to carry out His mission. A great man (but only a man), as the Jews expected Messiah to be, could not have conquered sin and death. Jesus had divine authority and power to carry out God’s plan.
 - Seven horns signify power and strength. Seven eyes signify the fullness of the Holy Spirit whom Jesus has sent out into all the world to enable believers in God’s mission to the world.
 - The lamb John saw who had been slain had clearly been resurrected. In new life, He stands exalted at the center of God’s throne ready to carry out His heavenly ministry

through the power of the Holy Spirit. His immediate task is to take the scroll that waits to be opened.

- Jesus came not to conquer Israel's human enemies, but to conquer sin and death, evil enemies of humanity. Only through Jesus' sacrificial death and suffering that paid the penalty due our sins, could anyone be saved from the universal human enemies of sin and death.
- When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to be baptized, he did not say, here comes the lion of the tribe of Judah. He said, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- In the Garden of Eden immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they had disobeyed. They were afraid of consequences, and in their newly fallen nature, they were ashamed of their nakedness. They took fig leaves and attempted to cover themselves, but there was no way they could cover the changes in them wrought by sin.
- Jesus came into the world to enable Adam and Eve and all their descendants to cover changes wrought by sin with His own blood. Once again, they could be "clean" and presentable to God.

4. Revelation 5:7: *And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.*

- No created being in heaven or earth was found worthy to take the scroll. Only the uncreated Jesus, the lion of Judah, the Son of God, is worthy (sufficient, capable) of opening the scroll and carrying out God's plan.
- Jesus' worthiness to open the scroll is based on His sacrificial death and resurrection on the third day that enabled salvation for all who believe. Jesus' provision for salvation made possible the completing of God's mission to make a holy people for Himself.
- Jesus takes the scroll from the right hand of God the Father. Only He, the crucified and resurrected God-Man, has authority to carry out God's plan.
- At this point, the focus of John's record of His vision shifts to heavenly worship (5:8-14).

5. Revelation 5:8-10: *And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "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, ¹⁰ and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."*

- This worship scene connects the situation of the churches of Revelation 2-3 to the execution of God's plan, that begins in Revelation 6. The Lamb who was slain on behalf of others will lead the way in defeating God's enemies once and for all.

- As the Lamb took the scroll, high-ranking angels and redeemed men (elders) immediately joined one another in worship of the Lamb. Each held a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
- Interestingly, the angels and elders did not intercede for the saints. They knew there is only one God and one Mediator between God and men, the God-Man, Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).
- Prayers of the saints are precious to God and are symbolized as golden bowls of incense.
- The connection between prayer and incense is seen in **Psalm 141:2: *Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!***
- The elders sang a new song. Victorinus observed about that song, *“It is a new thing that the Son of God should become man. It is a new thing to ascend into the heavens with a body. It is a new thing to give remission of sins to men. It is a new thing for men to be sealed with the Holy Spirit. It is a new thing to receive the priesthood of sacred observance, and to look for a kingdom of unbounded promise.”*
- The new song honors Jesus for paying the price of redemption (***for you were slain***), for His work that redeemed us (***by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and nation***), for the result of His work (***made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth***).
- In John’s time, Roman Emperors were honored with the Latin expression *vere dignus*, which is translated “You are worthy.” Here, not Rome’s ruler, but the ruler of all creation is honored.
- We saw praise for God’s work of creation in Revelation 4:11. In these verses the praise emphasizes God’s work of redemption.

6. Revelation 5:11-12: *Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands,¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”*

- Numbering ‘myriads of myriads’ is a figurative way of saying the number of angels is an incomprehensible number, like saying billions of billions. All these angels joined the 4 living creatures and 24 elders in singing ***“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”***
- The angels do not offer praise for their own redemption because angels are not subjects of this redemption (but they are careful observers of it). The angels show us how we should praise God for the way He works in the lives of other people.

7. Revelation 5:13-14: *And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”¹⁴ And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.*

- At this point, all creation begins to praise the Father and the Lamb, every creature in heaven and on earth, under the earth and in the sea. All creatures say to the Father and the Son, receive blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.
- At the sound of every creature praising God, the four living creatures said, “***Amen!***” The elders fell down and worshiped. Jesus is about to open the scroll. Before He does, remember opinions differ as what is written in the scroll.
- Some believe it is the book of life, or at least it contains the names written in the book of life. But, as we will see next time, it is more than that. The scroll symbolizes God’s sovereignty and His divine plan. It deals with both salvation and judgment. He is sovereign over history.
- As we continue to think about Revelation, it is worthwhile to contemplate Isaiah’s instruction.

8. Isaiah 46:9-10: *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose."*

- God’s people need to remember this about the LORD – that He knows the end from the beginning and is in control over all things including all people.
- When we remember that truth, we will strive to show ourselves to be people of courage, grounded in faith in God, who He is, what He has done, and what He will do.