

“The Book”

Revelation 5:1-14

Introduction: Chapter five is a continuation of the scene in heaven where John was able to receive the vision of the throne of God. In chapter five, the scene begins to change. The change is one from splendor and wonder to that of horror and destruction.

The Person on the throne (I believe represents the Son of God) is seen holding a book (a scroll) and out of the throne rises the Lamb, and is seen taking the book from the right hand of the One on the throne. Keep in mind that this is a vision and there are some things that take place that we won't truly understand. Also, keep in mind that the seen here has in vision the Trinity – the three Persons of the Godhead (the throne, the Person on the throne, and the seven Spirits of God). The Trinity isn't three separate Persons – it is One Person with three distinct works. God the Father and God the Son are seen as One on the throne in chapter 4, and now in chapter 5 they are seen, briefly, as separate. The throne itself represents the Father, but in order for John to understand the imagery here the vision had to give the Father human characteristics (as is seen throughout the Bible – the hand of God, the finger of God, the eyes of God, etc.), although the Father is a spirit and doesn't have “flesh and bones.” So, the Person on the throne holds out the book and out of the throne scene rises the Lamb of God and He takes the book from Himself, as it were – all to demonstrate He was the only One that was worthy to do so. It also shows that what Jesus claimed on earth as being equal with the Father, and of being

God Himself was in fact an absolute truth – and this scene shows that (as well as several other scenes in the vision as it unfolds shows).

I. THE PRESENTATION OF THE BOOK THAT NEEDED OPENED – VS. 1-4

A. *The book is seen being held by "him that sat on the throne" – the same Person as in chapter 4*

B. *The "book" spoken of here is not like our bound books today but was a scroll*

C. *The book was "written within and on the backside" – it was written on both sides – more than likely with the same content on both sides so that those that were listening to it being read could also read it for themselves*

D. *The book was "sealed with seven seals" – these seals are described in chapters 6-8*

E. *Verse 2 mentions the presentation of the book was given by a "strong angel" that put forth the question as to who was "worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof"*

1. "Strong angel" refers to the position the angel would have had – probably one of the archangels – the term "strong" is intended to be coupled with the "loud voice" to show his authority and power

2. His sole purpose was to ask the question "who"

F. The scene unfolds as the angel presents the book that is being held by the Person on the throne with a search being made in heaven, in earth and "under the earth" (in the realm of the dead) – these represent the universe – for someone who had the authority to open the book but none was found (of God's created beings, that is)

G. John is seen as weeping because there was no one worthy

1. Much speculation has been given as to why John was weeping
2. We can not be sure what is meant by this but it is most likely that he was simply grieved over the possibility that this wondrous vision would end that quickly because there was no one to read the book
3. Perhaps this is to show how unworthy we are without Someone to stand in our place – we would never be worthy of heaven, never be deserving of heaven, if Jesus, the Lamb of God, had not taken our place and paid for our sins

II. THE PERSON WORTHY TO OPEN THE BOOK – VS. 5-8

A. The One who took the book is described in verse 5 as being

1. "The Lion of the tribe of Juda" – His is from the tribe of Judah as His genealogy shows (Matt. 1)
2. "The Root of David" – again, Jesus was of the kingly lineage of David
3. Both of these were to fulfill prophecy

Gen 49:9-10 Judah *is* a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? (10) The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

Isa 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Isa 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Jer 23:5-6 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. (6) In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.



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B. He is said to have "prevailed to open the book" – He hath acquired the power and right as a result of victory in a conflict or struggle – this would be as a result of His victory over death

1Co 15:54-55 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. (55) O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?

C. Vs. 6 – Out of the midst of the elders and the beasts, up out of (or off of) the throne "stood a Lamb"

1. The Person on the throne of chapter 5 now stands up and as He begins to stand His image changes from the glorified being that sat on the throne to the image of a Lamb as described here

2. "As it had been slain" – of course, this would be the crucified Saviour – points to the OT sacrifice that was offered on the Day of Atonement
3. This Lamb is mentioned 27 times in the Book of Revelation – it is the image of the Saviour that is seen – it points to His substitutionary work on the cross
4. "Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God"
 - a) Seven is mentioned 54 times in Revelation, 5 times in this chapter
 - b) The horn is a symbol of power and dominion, seven is the number of perfection in the Bible, the number of completion – put together these 7 horns point to the absolute authority of Christ as the Lamb that was slain, having conquered death, hell and the grave
 - c) The seven eyes and seven Spirits have been explained before – point to the omniscience and omnipresence of God – and that this Lamb is God

D. Vs. 7 – this Lamb that was slain is seen taking the book from the One on the throne

1. Again, there is only one God – not three
2. This is simply imagery for John to understand what was taking place
3. The One on the throne and the Lamb are

one and the same Persons

E. Vs. 8 – As the Lamb took the book the beasts and the elders are seen as falling down before Him just as they did the One on the throne – again, they are worshipping the same Person

1. The 4 beasts are bowing here but it is only the 24 elders that have the harps and the vials and that sing the song in the next verse
2. They are all seen as having “harps” – an instrument of worship
3. They are all seen as having “golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints”
 - a) They were not mediating prayer for the saints but are demonstrating the part prayer plays in our worship of God
 - b) Worship is to be more private than public and when we worship God we are not only to praise Him (the harps) but we are to pray to Him and those prayers are seen here, as elsewhere in the Bible, as a sweet odor, as a satisfying tribute to God from the believer

**III. THE PRAISE FOR THE OPENING OF THE BOOK
– vs. 9-14**

A. “They sung a new song”

1. A “new” song in that it had not been sung

before in heaven – it was something new to the scene

2. Some refer to this as the song of redemption and it is seen as being sung by the elders for they represent the saints of the ages
3. There is some indication in the way the text was written that only the elders were the ones singing the “new” song – the song of redemption – because the “beasts” represent the angelic hosts and they need no redemption

[Rev 14:1-3](#) And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (2) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: (3) And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

B. The content of the song is mentioned in the latter part of verse 9-10

1. “For thou wast slain” – speaks of the crucifixion
 - a) The Son of God as the “Lamb” here points to the Old Testament sacrificial lamb that was slain on the Day of Atonement, and the

blood of the lamb was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to cover the sins of the people

- b) When Jesus hung on the cross, He was that final sacrifice, as the Lamb that was slain, and paid the final price for our sin – no longer were they just covered, they were removed

Heb 9:12-14 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*. (13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: (14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 10:1-4 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (2) For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. (3) But in those *sacrifices there is* a remembrance again *made* of sins every year. (4) For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

- c) It was because He was slain, as the fulfillment of the type in the Old Testament, that He was found worthy to open the seals and the book

Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

1Pe 1:19-20 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: (20) Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

2. "And hast redeemed us to God by thy blood"

- a) It's only through the blood that anyone is saved – past, present, and future
- b) The issue of redemption is critical to our faith in the shed blood of Christ – it was the work on the cross that provided the payment needed to redeem us – to buy us back (the word literally means "to purchase")
- c) We have not just been purchased, we have been purchased back "to God" – this happened when we accepted the payment made, through repentance and faith
- d) This phrase defines faith – "to God" – we turn in repentance from sin, in faith "to God"

Isa 59:20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

Act 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. "Out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"

a) "Every kindred" – literally, of every tribe – a comparatively small division or class of people associated together (Barnes) – it refers to a family, or race, having a common ancestor

b) "And tongue" – a division of the human family larger than a tribe and smaller than a nation – "no matter what language the component parts of the nations speak, the gospel will be conveyed to them, and in their own tongue they will learn the wonderful works of God" (Barnes)

[Act 2:8-11](#) And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? (9) Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, (10) Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

c) "And people" – denotes a larger body of people than the previous two – the individual races of people that make up a nation

d) "And nation" – even larger group of people, under one rule or sovereign

e) Put together – there will be nowhere that the Gospel will not be available to be heard, and there will be people from all parts of

the earth in heaven that have been redeemed (seen in the vision of the 24 elders, representing, as we've pointed out, the saints of all the ages)

4. Vs. 10 – “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests”

a) The position of the saints during the Millennial reign of Christ

b) “Kings” – demonstrates position

c) “Priests” – we are a royal priesthood now, but this could be pointing to the spiritual leaders being from the Nation of Israel

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

1Pe 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Isa 61:6 But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: *men* shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

Isa 66:21 And I will also take of them for priests *and* for Levites, saith the LORD.

5. “And we shall reign on the earth” – further confirms the position we will have during His final earthly reign

Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests

unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Rev 20:4-6 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (5) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. (6) Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Rev 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

C. Joining in with the 24 elders is an innumerable number of angelic beings in pronouncing the Lamb that was slain as worthy to open the book because of what He had done – vs. 11-12

D. Verse 13 shows that not just the beast and the elders and the angels but all of creation is seen worshipping God – "him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb" – this is not two people but one – just as Jesus said "I and my Father are one"

Joh 10:29-30 My Father, which gave *them* me,

is greater than all; and no *man* is able to pluck *them* out of my Father's hand. (30) I and my Father are one.

Joh 1:1-2 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God.

Tit 2:13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and [Who is] our Saviour Jesus Christ;

E. The final adoration of the Lamb is given in verse 14 where the 24 elders fall down and worship Him again – this will be repeated over and over by the saints in heaven – that is what is in view here

Conclusion: Chapter 5 shows the authority our Saviour has to bring judgment to the earth and this judgment is seen in the next few chapters. It is because He is worthy that He has that right and authority.