

Revelation 5 | “From the Tomb to the Throne Room”
Preached on April 9, 2023 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to Revelation 5, and we will be covering the whole chapter today.

You heard that right, we are going to be in Revelation on Easter. *[pause]*

There are times that we need to hear the well-known stories of Christ’s resurrection, but there are other times we need to hear other unique passages on the resurrection.

And today will be one of those unique passages. *[pauseeee]*

Is history going anywhere? Is there a goal? Is there an end?

Is the world just going to keep going and going how it’s going forever?

Are we as a universe just victims of blind fate? *[pause]*

There are many different views on what people think about the future of the universe.

Interestingly, in recent times there have been many books written and movies made about the future of the earth.

Some envision a time of zombies or some other type of dystopia.

Others picture the world ending completely in some cataclysmic event, and blame the changing climate. *[pause]*

There are a lot of differing thoughts on where the world is going in the future.

And some people don’t even think about the future because they are so consumed with the here and now. *[pause]*

Well the passage before us gives us some answers.

In Revelation 5, we do not see so much the details of what exactly will happen in the future concerning the world, for that will come in the rest of the book of Revelation...

But rather, it shows us *who* will bring about the end goal of mankind, and surprisingly, it’s a Lamb. *[pauseeee]*

In regards to the context, Revelation 5 is right after Revelation 4, which described God the Father sitting on His glorious throne.

In that chapter, the reader is sort of taken into the heavenly throne room of God, where you have 4 living creatures singing to the Lord, as well as 24 elders falling down and worshiping Him as Creator.

Now as we look at Revelation 5, we are still in that throne room scene, and instead of the Lord being worshiped as Creator, He will be worshiped as Redeemer. *[pauseeee]*

Let's READ the passage. *[READ]*

This chapter first starts out with a question...

I. Is there anyone worthy?

God the Father is seated on His throne, and in verse 1, it zooms in, so to say, to His right hand.

In His right hand is a scroll, which has writing both in it and on the back of it.

It's also sealed with 7 seals. *[pause]*

A mighty angel then loudly asks who is worthy to open the scroll and break the seals.

No one in all the universe was able to do so.

And to emphasize how no one was worthy, it says, "No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it."

I'd say that's all-encompassing, right? *[pause]*

As a result of seeing that no one was able to open the scroll, John weeps greatly.

Just imagine John, a grown man, just utterly weeping and weeping. *[pauseeeee]*

What's going on here?

What is this whole scroll thing about?

Why is no one worthy to open it?

And why does John break down over no one being able to open it? *[pause]*

This scroll is in God's right hand and it's sealed with 7 seals, so it's very important, right?

Not just anyone can open a scroll that's sealed that many times and in the hand of the Creator of the Universe. *[pause]*

So what's the scroll?

The scroll is God's plan and will for history.

It is the destiny of the nations.

What you find later on in Revelation is that the scroll is opened, seal by seal, and that's what brings the end times events. *[pause]*

If you remember, the scroll has writing all in it and on the back of it, signifying that there's a lot of things that will come to pass.

But also think of it this way: all of that writing means that God's plan and will for the end of history is *already written!*

And it's in His right hand, meaning that He's in ultimate control of it! *[pauseeee]*

What a truth to reflect upon!

We aren't victims of chance.

The future isn't up in the air.

But rather, the future is already written and in God's hand! *[pause]*

He isn't going to be caught off guard by some unforeseen event.

He's not at the whim of the nations, but He has written what is to come upon the nations.

So why fear?

The Creator, who is worthy of all worship, is the One who has already written the beginning, middle, and end. *[pauseeee]*

This knowledge of what the scroll is makes the second question easier to answer...

Why is no one found worthy to open it?

Because it is God's plan and will for history!

Whoever takes and opens that scroll is the one who both reveals God's plan and implements it. *[pause]*

By taking that scroll, God is essentially transferring power to that person, for it shows that they would have the right and power to open and perform God's plan.

And so not just anyone can open and institute God's plan for the future. *[pause]*

Who among us on earth is worthy to bring about judgments?

Who is worthy to overthrow Satan's dominion over this world?

Who is worthy to take and open a scroll from God's hand in the heavens?

We all have sinned and fallen short.

We are limited, imperfect people - that's why no one is found worthy in all the universe.

Only someone authorized could break open a seal of a letter, and we definitely don't meet the standard. *[pause]*

And so as John witnesses no one being able to open the scroll, he weeps.

The reason is this...

If no one opens the scroll, God's purposes aren't brought to completion, and believers won't be finally delivered from evil, but it's held off indefinitely.

That means that if no one opens the scroll, things won't be made right, and there will be no judgment of evil. *[pauseeeee]*

When a little child listens to an exciting story, what do they ask?

"How is it going to end?"

When we think of the story of our world, we wonder the same thing.

We want answers to everything, and we can't stand unsolved mysteries.

Well John wanted to know the end and He wanted God's plans to come about, but how could they come about unless someone could take and open the scroll? *[pauseeee]*

If you don't feel the weight of John's sorrow, then you haven't looked around at the wickedness and chaos of our world long enough.

John has gone through the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and he was exiled on the Island of Patmos.

He was longing for the Lord's kingdom to come, and for God to fulfill all of His promises.

And we as believers are in the same boat...

We look around and see evil in this world.

But the problem is that none of us can make things right or bring about God's plan for the world. *[pause]*

Without anyone opening the scroll, there is only sorrow and weeping, as there is no hope.

But praise be to God, the story doesn't end there.

While none of us can open the scroll...

II. There is One who is worthy!

So John is weeping, but what happens next?

One of the elders says to him, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” *[pause]*

There *is* someone worthy!

It’s not hopeless!

“The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” has stepped forward and is worthy to open the scroll! *[pause]*

This is none other than Jesus Christ.

He was physically born and came forth from the tribe of Judah, but He’s also before David, so that he can be called the “Root of David”. *[pause]*

But did you notice something?

John is told that this is the lion of the tribe of Judah, but when he looks, he sees a lamb. *[pauseeee]*

This reminds us that He is both the Lion *and* the Lamb.

He is a fierce, strong King and He is also the sacrificial lamb that was slain.

We hold up both together and rejoice in both, for we needed Him to be both.

We not only need a strong King, but we needed a sacrificial Savior. *[pause]*

We were in our sins and under condemnation.

But Jesus Christ came to this earth, taking on humanity, and dying in our place.

He was the spotless, perfect Lamb that has become our substitute.

Because of His sacrifice on our behalf, He took our sins and paid for them on the Cross.

But He is also that strong kingly Lion who will come and defeat all of the enemies of God and rule with a rod of iron.¹ *[pauseeee]*

As John looks at the lamb, he says that the lamb is standing there as though it had been slain. *[pause]*

What a beautiful picture of the death and resurrection of Christ!

He is the Lamb who was slain, “who takes away the sin of the world.”²

¹ See Psalm 2:9 and Revelation 2:27.

² John 1:29.

But He's also standing there, showing us that He's alive! *[pause]*

This is what we celebrate today on Resurrection Sunday!

The Lamb who was slain didn't remain slain, and He may even have the marks of being slain, but He's fully alive!

He has conquered sin and death!

Death and the grave couldn't hold him.

How could it hold the Author of life?³ *[pauseeee]*

This is no normal person, and this is no normal Lamb, for the Lamb is said to have 7 horns and 7 eyes.

Now that's an interesting image, isn't it?

The number 7 in the Bible is representative of completion and perfection, and we find that He has 7 horns and 7 eyes. *[pause]*

Horns in the Bible represent power and authority, so that means that He has complete authority and power.

And then His 7 eyes represent being all-knowing, knowing everything throughout the entire earth, as we find that these 7 eyes are the 7 spirits of God sent out into the entire earth. *[pause]*

All of this is to highlight the power and all-knowing precision of Christ the Lamb. *[pause]*

The One who has risen has complete power and authority, no one can topple him!

The One who has risen knows all things, none can compare! *[pauseeee]*

This Christ, the lion and the lamb, is the One who is worthy, for He goes and takes the scroll out of God the Father's hand. *[pause]*

Remember how I said earlier that God the Father holds the future in His hand in the scroll?

Well now what do we see?

He has passed it on to Christ to reveal and fulfill it! *[pause]*

There's no one better to accomplish the rest of history than the risen Christ!

He will bring about judgment upon evil, He will deliver His people, and bring all things to completion with His return.

³ Reference to the title given to Jesus in Acts 3:15.

If He has perfectly carried out the Father's will in dying and rising again, then we can trust that He will carry out the Father's will for the rest of history. *[pauseeee]*

We think we are so worthy and powerful to discern the end from the beginning, but only Christ can reveal, and bring to completion the end.

We are at the mercy of God's purposes and plans.

We can't control the future, for we don't know what will happen in the next hour, let alone the end of the ages.

All our mouths are shut when it comes to fulfilling the plan for the world.

But this doesn't mean that we lose heart and despair. *[pause]*

Yes, there is sometimes mystery, and this chaotic world seems sometimes out of control, but this passage is pushing us to see that it is in Christ's hands.

It is Christ who reveals and brings all things to completion.

We are not victims of blind fate, but we are in the hands of our blessed Redeemer!

So we have hope! *[pause]*

God's plan will unfold, for the Lion and the Lamb, the one with all authority, and who knows all things, will accomplish everything. [pause]

His love was shown in Him being slain, but His power is shown in Him standing before the throne.

Without what He did, we would have no hope, but because He lives, we have hope! [pauseeeee]

I love how the elder told John to weep no more, and his reason was because of the risen Christ.

And it just goes to show that when we remember the risen Christ, all tears are dried up.

Like John's tears, our tears are not the final word!

As John's tears were gone with the arrival of Christ, so ours will be wiped away when he comes again!

We should be the most hope-filled people on earth because we have One who is not only worthy, but who has stepped forward to accomplish God's plan. *[pauseeeee]*

So why is He worthy to open the scroll?

It's not only because of who Christ is, but what He has done - He has conquered.

He conquered sin and death on the cross and resurrection, so He has the right to rule. [pause]

Think of it this way...

God has a plan of having a people, who will worship Him forever.

Well how can that plan be fulfilled if all have sinned and all are condemned after the Fall?

Through Christ's redemption on the Cross and in the Tomb! *[pause]*

That's why after Christ takes the scroll, they sing in verses 9-10...

“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.” *[pause]*

Christ can bring God's plan to completion because He ransomed a people for God, and so He will finish and complete that plan.

He will bring His people home and remove all threats forever. *[pauseeee]*

What a stunning truth!

People have such a small view of Christ, or a small view of His work.

But how can you walk away after seeing this passage without marveling at Him? *[pause]*

He is worthy to open the scroll, and accomplish God's plan for the end of times.

The universe *is* going somewhere, there *is* an end goal in mind, and Christ is the *One* who plays the biggest part in it. *[pause]*

Evil will someday be dealt with, and we will be delivered once and for all.

So as you look around and see the evil of this current age.

As you suffer, as you strive, remember that the *One* who is the Lion and the Lamb will someday make all things right. *[pauseeee]*

So Christ is the One and only One worthy to open the scroll, and therefore, we see that...

III. He is worthy to be praised!

After the lamb takes the scroll, we are told that the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before the lamb.

But what's interesting is that we are told that they are holding golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. *[pause]*

It's easy to just breeze right over that detail, but it's so good. *[pause]*

Incense is an aroma that was to be burned in the Temple, and it was pleasing to God.

And now we see that like incense rising up to God's nostrils and pleasing Him, so that's what the prayers of the saints are like.

This is why David says in Psalms, "Let my prayer be counted as incense before you."⁴ *[pauseeee]*

Our prayers are pleasing to Him!

But not only are they pleasing, it's like they are held in bowls in Heaven and go right up to His nose. *[pause]*

Our prayers are not forgotten or neglected!

It's not like they go up a little bit and fall down, or go up and get blocked by something.

No, they go right up into Heaven and to God Himself.

And that means that He cares about our prayers and they please Him! *[pauseeee]*

Since this note of the prayers of the saints is in connection with the scroll, then it shows us something amazing.

It means that our prayers for deliverance from this evil age, and for all things to be made right will be answered!

Our hope will not be hope deferred, but it will be hope fulfilled!⁵ *[pause]*

Christ is the fulfillment of our prayers, for He is the One who takes the scroll to fulfill everything!

And He is worthy to be worshiped. *[pause]*

So the living creatures and elders fall down before the lamb, and sing a new song...

"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...

...and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."
[pause]

This reminds us that worship and praise is the only right response to the Lord's marvelous work.

He deserves all praise, and praise is often associated with song.

This is why we are called to sing to Him, but do we sing with hearts of worship? *[pauseeee]*

⁴ Psalm 141:2a.

⁵ A reference to Proverbs 13:12.

As we look at the content of their song, we see that they are highlighting that Christ deserves all the praise, glory, and honor for His work of redemption.

He ransomed a people by His blood. *[pause]*

We were slaves to sin, and under condemnation, but He purchased us by shedding His blood.

We belong to Him, and that's why we have become a kingdom and priests to God. *[pause]*

We aren't just saved and then sent on our way - that's how a lot of people think about Christianity.

But the reality is that we are ransomed and bought by the Lord, so that we should serve Him with our lives.

We are His, and we are to live lives under His Lordship.

He is our King, and someday we will reign with Him on the earth! *[pauseeee]*

We also see that He didn't just ransom a small little group in the Middle East, but He ransomed people from every tribe, language, people, and nation!

His work of redemption is global. *[pauseeee]*

After this song sung by the living creatures and elders, John then looks and sees around the throne myriads and myriads of angels.

And these angels are loudly saying, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" *[pauseeee]*

The angels all recognize that Christ deserves everything: power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.

What else could you say? He deserves everything!

He will forever and always be known as the Lamb who was slain, for His work of redemption has created a people for God, who will live forever with Him! *[pauseeee]*

You see, we are a people who didn't deserve anything, for we had sinned against the Creator God, who sits on the throne.

Yet by Christ's shed blood for us, we are forgiven of our sins and reconciled back to God, and given eternal life to live with Him. *[pause]*

What a wonderful act of grace and love!

What a marvelous work of redemption!

We get to be reconciled back to the Creator of the world, who is perfect, just, and loving!

To live with Him means eternal bliss! *[pause]*

Have you repented of your sins and trusted in Christ's shed blood on the Cross for you?

He is the only way to be redeemed out of sin and condemnation, and to live with God forever.

For we know that those who do not trust in Jesus Christ and who are not ransomed will go on in eternity without God.

They will live forever in Hell, apart from God.

So see His love and grace on the Cross, His power in His resurrection, and believe in Him today!

Today can be the day of salvation for you.⁶ *[pauseee]*

Looking at the songs and words of praise in this chapter, it started out with the living creatures and the elders singing a song.

Then it zoomed out to the angels praising Him.

But now it zooms out once more to all of creation - every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea worshiping Him.

They say, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" *[pause]*

What a scene!

To have every creature in all of the universe praise you just shows that you are worthy of praise, and that's what God is! *[pause]*

Both Him on the throne and the Lamb are praised in this one, and it just shows us undeniable evidence of Jesus' divinity.

He's placed on the same level as God the Father.

They are both worthy of blessing, honor, glory, and might forever. *[pause]*

And before the God of the Universe and such praise for Him, the four living creatures can't help but say, "Amen," and the elders can't help but fall down and worship.

Is that your attitude towards the Lord Almighty? *[pause]*

After reading such a passage as this, how is it that we can just stand here and sing as though God wasn't on the throne?

⁶ A reference to 2 Corinthians 6:2.

How can we sing as though Christ hasn't ransomed us, and made us a kingdom and priests to God?

How can we just go through the motions every week and sing with no heart behind it?

How can we sing with no joy or passion?

May God radically wake us out of our stupor!

May we fall down and worship Him who sits on the throne and the Lamb!

May we say like the living creatures, "Amen!" to the worship and worth of Christ!

For we are reminded that...

Christ, the One who died and rose again, deserves all praise!

So as I asked earlier: is history going anywhere? Is there a goal? Is there an end?

Is the world just going to keep going and going how it's going forever?

Is evil always going to prevail? Will God's people ever be delivered?

How's it going to end? *[pause]*

This morning, we may not have studied the part of *how* it's going to end, but we did discover *who* would bring God's plan to fulfillment: Jesus Christ.

Only He is worthy to carry out God's plan for the end times, for He is the lion, but also the lamb, who has conquered. *[pause]*

He died to ransom a people for God, and now He is alive forevermore.

He will come again soon to set all things right, and we look with hope to His appearing. *[pause]*

As John was told, "Weep no more," because the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered...

...So as we look to Him, our tears of despair are dried up, and they are replaced with songs of praise. *[pauseeee]*

You know, right now we aren't like John, where we are transported to the throne room of God, but through the hearing of God's Word, it's sort of like we were.

And in our hearts, we can join in that worship even now!

So after I finish here, we are going to join in this amazing worship scene by worshiping the same Savior by singing, "Crown Him with Many Crowns."