

THE LION WHO IS A LAMB

Introduction

1. Ray Summers suggested that chapter 4 of Revelation could be titled, “Believe in God;” while chapter 5 could be called, “Believe also in me” (cf. John 14:1).
2. Chapter 4 emphasized that God is on His throne – still reigning and ruling over the world no matter how dire things looked for the church.
3. Chapter 5 focuses upon Jesus as assurance of God’s faithfulness and man’s victory.
4. Still in the throne room of Heaven, John is introduced to the Lion who is a Lamb.

I. Who Is Worthy?

(5:1-4)

- A. First, John saw a scroll held in the right hand of God on His throne.
 1. The modern idea of a book – pages bound together, usually within a cover – did not come into existence until about the 4th century.
 2. Thus, what John saw was a scroll.
 3. This scroll was a complete record, for there was writing on the front and back of the parchment (cf. Ezekiel 2:9-10).
 4. Obviously, the scroll contained the record of the “things which must be hereafter” that John had been chosen to learn (4:1).
- B. However, this scroll was sealed with seven seals.
 1. The seal was melted wax into which an insignia was pressed.
 2. “The seal verified ownership, assured genuineness, and protected the contents” (Hutton).
 3. It was perfectly sealed, indicated by the number seven.
 4. Thus, the sealing of this book symbolized that it was the authoritative Word of God, though it was not yet revealed (cf. Isaiah 8:16; 29:11; Daniel 8:26; 12:4-9).
 5. This scroll contained the truths to be revealed to John; thus, it served as a complete record of God’s plan to redeem man and give him victory over sin and death.
- C. As John looked, a strong angel with a loud voice asked a crucial question: “Who is worthy to open the book and loose its seals?”
 1. To open the book meant to expose its contents to John and the world.
 2. Who is worthy to reveal the Word of God and execute His purposes?
- D. As the cry of the angel echoed away into silence, the answer was clear – no man or angel was worthy.
- E. John wept (and continued to weep) because this meant that the revelation needed by the church would remain unknown by man.
 1. Does it make us weep to think of those who have never heard the Word of God?
 2. One asked, “How can we be ‘a dry-eyed church in a hell-bound world?’” (cf. Joel 2:12; Mark 14:72; Philippians 3:18).

II. The Lamb Is Worthy

(5:5-14)

- A. John was soon comforted because one of the elders informed him that there was someone who could open the book.

The Book of Revelation

Lesson Twelve

Revelation 5:1-14

1. Jesus was able to open the seals for He had prevailed (conquered, overcome).
2. This is the same word used for the promises to those who overcome in chapters 2 and 3.
- B. He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.
 1. This refers to Jacob's prophecy about Judah (Genesis 49:9-10; Hebrews 7:14).
 2. It symbolizes the strength and power of Jesus (cf. Matthew 12:29; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57; etc.).
 3. As the Root of David, Jesus descended directly from Israel's greatest king (cf. 2 Samuel 7:11-14; Psalm 89:3ff; Isaiah 11:1-10).
- C. Yet when John looked to see this Lion, he saw a Lamb instead.
 1. He saw not just a Lamb, but one that had the appearance of having been slain (slaughtered, butchered).
 2. Clearly, this is a reference to Jesus (13:8; Isaiah 53:7; John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32-33; 1 Peter 1:19).
 3. Even though it had been slain, the Lamb was standing – indicating the resurrection from the dead.
 4. The seven horns symbolized His omnipotence – perfect power and authority (cf. 1 Samuel 2:10; Micah 4:13; Habakkuk 3:4; Luke 1:69).
 5. The seven eyes symbolized His omniscience – manifested through the Holy Spirit (cf. Colossians 2:3; 2 Chronicles 16:9; John 16:13).
 6. "All the earth" represents His omnipresence.
- D. Jesus reigns as a Lion because He was submissive as a sacrificial Lamb.
- E. Thus, Jesus is worthy to take and open the scroll in God's hand.
- F. When He took the book from God, the living creatures and the elders worshipped Him.
 1. The harp symbolized praise (14:2; 15:2).
 2. The incense symbolized prayer (8:3-4; Psalm 141:2; Luke 1:10).
 3. The new song is one of gratitude for what has been accomplished by the Lamb (14:3-4; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).
 4. Through His death, He has redeemed men from all nations that they might become a kingdom of priests (cf. Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14).
 5. As Christ reigns, they reign with Him – though upon the earth – in victory over Satan, sin, and persecution.
- G. The innumerable host of angels also worships Him as a Lamb who is worthy (cf. 4:11; 7:11).
- H. Finally, all creation joins in praising both God on the throne and the Lamb who is worthy (cf. Psalm 148).
- I. The only thing to be said is, "Amen."
- J. God is worthy of worship!

Conclusion: *Behold the Lamb!*

1. The Slain Lamb (vs. 9)
2. The Standing Lamb (vs. 5)
3. The Special Lamb (vs. 12-13)