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Worthy!

Series: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

May 9, 2021

Revelation 5

I. **Structure of Revelation**

- A. **Revelation 1:19** (NASB95) — 19 “Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things.”
1. **Have seen**
 - a. Vision of Christ in Chapter 1
 2. **Are**
 - a. Current state of 7 churches
 3. **After these things**
 - a. **Revelation 4:1** (NASB95) — 1 After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place **after these things.**”
 - b. Chapters 4-22
- B. **Prologue**
1. **Revelation 1:1-2**
 - a. Description of the nature of the book
 2. **Revelation 1:3**
 - a. Blessing for the diligent reader
 3. **Revelation 1.4-5a**
 - a. Greeting
 4. **Revelation 1.5b-6**
 - a. Doxology
 5. **Revelation 1.7-8**
 - a. Theme
 - b. Jesus Christ is coming
 - (1) Tribes of earth will mourn over Him
 - (2) Eschatological triumph of Christ over the anti-Christian forces of evil in the world and in the heavenly realms
 - c. **Purpose – encourage the churches under great pressure**
 - (1) Series: Between Rock and a Hard Place
- C. How is this purpose accomplished?
1. **Four visions**
 - a. **“In the Spirit”**
 2. **Revelation 1:9-10**
 - a. First vision

- (1) The glorified Christ
 - (2) The messages to the seven churches
 3. **Revelation 4:1–2**
 - a. Second vision
 - (1) The heavenly vision
 - (2) The tribulation
 4. **Revelation 17:1–3**
 - a. Third vision
 - (1) The mystery of Babylon
 - (2) Judgment of Babylon
 - (3) Final triumph and consummation
 5. **Revelation 21:9–10**
 - a. Fourth vision
 - (1) The New Jerusalem
- D. **Structure of the 2nd Vision**
1. **Chapter 4 – Almighty God on His throne**
 2. **Chapter 5 – Lamb**
 3. **6.1-8.5 – Seven Seals**
 - a. Rider – white horse; conqueror
 - b. Rider – red horse; takes peace from earth
 - c. Rider – black horse; wheat and barley for denarius (famine)
 - d. Rider – ashen horse; death with Hades close behind
 - e. Martyrs; “how long”; white robes; told to wait until other martyrs
 - f. Earthquake – sun darkened, moon turned to blood; great people afraid
 - (1) 144,000 sealed
 - (2) Great multitude in white robes
 - g. Silence; angels given trumpets; prayers of saints; thunder, lightning, earthquake; no real content
 4. **8.6-14.20 – Seven trumpets**
 - a. Hail, fire, blood thrown to earth; 1/3 earth burned
 - b. Burning mountain into sea; 1/3 sea life dead
 - c. Star fell from heaven; on 1/3 of rivers and springs; wormwood; death due to bitter water
 - d. 1/3 sun, moon, stars darkened; 3 woes announced by eagle
 - e. Fallen angel given key to abyss; locusts from pit harm only those not sealed; tormented, not killed; king of locusts is “destroyer”
 - f. 4 angels, armies of horsemen; kill 1/3 with smoke, fire, brimstone; witnesses prophesy for 3 ½ years; beast of abyss kills witnesses; resurrected after 3 ½ days; earthquake kills 7,000
 - g. Fulfillment of kingdom announced; temple opened; thunder, lightning, earthquake, hailstorm; 2 signs in heaven; war in heaven; beast of sea, beast of earth; mark of beast; 144,000 with Lamb on Zion; angels reap
 5. **15.1-16.21 – bowls completing God’s wrath**

- a. Malignant sore on those with mark of beast
 - b. Blood into sea; death of all in sea
 - c. Blood in rivers and springs
 - d. Scorched from heat of sun
 - e. Kingdom of beast darkened – extreme pain
 - f. Euphrates dried to make way for gathering of kings at Armageddon
 - g. “It is done”; lightning, thunder, great earthquake; hailstorm; wrath on Babylon
- E. Important to have these things in mind as we explore contents of Chapter 5
- 1. Chapter 5 revolves around the concept of worthiness
 - 2. First no one is worthy to do something
 - 3. Then someone is worthy to do that
 - 4. Then there is a heavenly acknowledgment of that One’s worthiness

II. **Worthy of What?**

- A. **Revelation 5:1–4** (NASB95) — 1 I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.
- 1. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”
 - 2. 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.
 - 3. 4 Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it
- B. Open the book and break its seals
- 1. What’s the big deal?
 - 2. What’s the book and what are the seals?
 - a. Seals are already identified and described
 - b. Book is harder
- C. **Book (scroll) = biblion**
- 1. 10 inch papyrus or leather pasted together and rolled
 - 2. Probably not a leaf book
 - a. Came into existence later – 2nd Century
 - b. Important – if leaf book, breaking a seal would reveal a portion of the contents of that book
 - (1) Book would be the elements of the tribulation
 - 3. Probably a scroll, rolled, and sealed on the outside with 7 seals
 - a. Seals are events which are preparatory to the revelation of the contents of the book
 - b. Seals
 - (1) Militarism
 - (2) War
 - (3) Famine
 - (4) Pestilence
 - (5) Martyrdom
 - (6) Extraordinary natural phenomena
 - (7) No real content; includes 7 trumpets

4. Most likely, contents of book cannot be revealed until all seals are broken
 - a. Book is about what happens after the tribulation
 - b. Prophecy of the end
 - (1) Includes judgment of evil
 - (2) Includes salvation of God's people
 - c. Seals are events leading up to the end, not the end themselves
 5. Contents of scroll are end events, both judicial and redemptive, which reveal the purpose of human history
- D. John weeps that no one is worthy to open the book and break seals
1. Ought to weep
 - a. No one able to break seals
 - (1) No one able to control historical events leading up to the end
 - b. Worse – no one able to open book
 - (1) No one able to bring history to its conclusion, goal, end
 - c. Without someone able to open, history has no meaning, life has no purpose
 - (1) Just an interplanetary space ship hurtling through space, with no destination
 2. Christian view of history – goal, purpose, end
 - a. Cf secular views
 - (1) Evolutionary – inevitable progress
 - (a) But toward what?
 - (b) Modern man has his feet firmly planted in mid-air (Schaeffer)
 - (2) Post-modern – no meta-narratives; no overarching stories to give meaning to history
 - (a) We create our own little meanings, even as we hurtle through space meaninglessly
 - b. Don't see how you can intelligently study history with a secular world view
- E. But the scroll is in the hand of God
1. He alone holds the purpose of history
 2. The book needs to be opened for history to come to its appointed conclusion
 3. Doesn't require strength, militaristic power
 - a. Strong angel raises the question!
 4. Requires worthiness
 - a. A moral attribute

III. Who is Worthy?

- A. Revelation 5:5-7 (NASB95) —
1. 5 and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."
 2. 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the

elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

3. 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

B. Elder tells John that One is worthy

C. **Lion from the tribe of Judah**

1. **Genesis 49:8–12** (NASB95) — Israel’s prophesy of each of his children
 - a. 8 “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father’s sons shall bow down to you.
 - b. 9 “Judah is a lion’s whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up?
 - c. 10 “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.
 - d. 11 “He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey’s colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes.
 - e. 12 “His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.
2. Lion is a royal animal; fierce; fearsome
3. Scepter shall not depart – speaks of a king
4. Ruler who will place the nations in subjection
 - a. Jewish literature uses Lion for their conquering Messiah
5. There is a king who is worthy

D. **Root of David**

1. **Isaiah 11:1–9** (NASB95) —
 - a. 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.
 - b. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
 - c. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear;
 - d. 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.
 - e. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist.
 - f. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them.
 - g. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

- h. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.
 - i. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.
 - 2. Image of a fallen tree (stem, or stump, of Jesse – David's father)
 - a. From root comes branch
 - 3. Meaning to Jew is clear – David's reign had ended; another king would arise from his line
 - 4. Nature of his rule – vv 2-9
 - a. Triumphant messianic reign
 - b. Wisdom, understanding, counsel, power
 - c. Righteous judge
 - d. Enforced peace
 - e. An established earthly kingdom with unprecedented peace
 - 5. Sounds like the millennium
 - E. John is excited now – the messianic king, the strong, conquering king, is worthy
 - 1. The amazing thing is that this Lion King has already triumphed
 - a. He has overcome (5.5; triumphed – NIV) – past tense
 - 2. NT often speaks this way due to the spiritual nature of God's enemies
 - a. **Colossians 2:15** (NASB95) — 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.
 - b. **Hebrews 1:3** (NASB95) — 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...
 - 3. The Lion King is already reigning!
 - a. But His rule is not yet complete
 - b. **Acts 2:33–35** (NASB95) — 33 “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. 34 “For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: ‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, “SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 35 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.” ’
 - (1) The Davidic king, the root of Jesse, David's Lord, is reigning now, but not all his enemies are yet a footstool
 - c. **1 Corinthians 15:25–26** (NASB95) — 25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. 26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.
 - 4. Exciting prospect for John to consider; he looks to see this Lion King
 - F. **Lamb, standing, as if slain!**
 - 1. Jewish Passover – Lamb sacrificed protected God's people from the angel of death

- a. Our Passover – Jesus used Passover to establish the New Covenant meal
 - 2. **Isaiah 53** – image of lamb describes the suffering servant
 - 3. **John 1:49** (NASB95) — 49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”
 - 4. **John 1:29** (NASB95) — 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
 - G. All of this makes the OT intelligible
 - 1. Messiah is both King and Lamb; ruler and suffering servant
 - H. Lamb with 7 horns and 7 eyes
 - 1. **Horns = strength**
 - a. **Deuteronomy 33:17** (NASB95) — 17 “As the firstborn of his ox, majesty is his, And his horns are the horns of the wild ox; With them he will push the peoples, All at once, to the ends of the earth. And those are the ten thousands of Ephraim, And those are the thousands of Manasseh.”
 - b. **Psalms 18:2** (NASB95) — 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
 - 2. **Eyes = fullness of vision, omniscience**
 - a. **Zechariah 4:10** (NASB95) — 10 “For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.”
 - b. Holy Spirit is in view
 - (1) Speaks of the close relationship between Messiah and HS
 - (2) **Galatians 4:6** (NASB95) — 6 Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”
 - (3) **John 14:18** (NASB95) — 18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”
- IV. **Why is the Lamb worthy?**
 - A. **Revelation 5:8–10** (NASB95) —
 - 1. 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
 - 2. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
 - 3. 10 “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”
 - B. New song of Living Creatures and Elders
 - 1. Proclaim His worthiness
 - 2. Based not on His deity, attributes, etc.
 - 3. Based on His work of redemption

- a. A particular work is required in order to be the One to bring history to its appointed conclusion
 - C. **“You were slain”** – His death on the cross
 - 1. But everyone dies; some are killed by others
 - 2. What was the function of this Lamb’s death?
 - D. **Purchased men for God**
 - 1. Common Pauline word
 - a. **1 Corinthians 6:20** (NASB95) — 20 For you have been bought with a price...
 - b. **1 Corinthians 7:23** (NASB95) — 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.
 - c. **Galatians 3:13** (NASB95) — 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”—
 - d. **Galatians 4:5** (NASB95) — 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - 2. Pagan mythology
 - a. Money deposited in temple of a certain god
 - b. The god purchased slave from human owner
 - c. Slave then remained the property of the god
 - 3. John uses the same image elsewhere
 - a. **Revelation 14:3** (NASB95) — 3 And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been **purchased** from the earth.
 - 4. Jesus’ death purchased men with the cost of His own blood
 - a. We belong to Him, and to no other
 - E. Purchased men from every tribe, tongue, people, nation
 - 1. Extent – not just Jews; people from everywhere
 - F. Not all – Made them to be a kingdom and priests
 - 1. Priests – immediate access to the Father
 - a. Restored the immediate access Adam and Eve had with the Father before the fall
 - 2. Kingdom – reign in millennium and in the eternal state
 - a. Receive the original dominion God gave to Adam before the fall!
- V. **What is the response to worthiness?**
 - A. **Revelation 5:11–14** (NASB95) —
 - 1. 11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,
 - 2. 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”
 - 3. 13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him

who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

4. 14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

B. **Worship**

1. The very word means worthiness (**OE = worthship**)

C. Angelic chorus joined

1. Myriads and myriads of angels
2. Loud voices!
3. Every created thing!

D. The very worship given to the Father is given to the Lamb as well

1. Blessing, honor, glory, dominion

VI. **The Lion King, the Lamb of God**

A. Has control of history

B. Will break the seals – unleashing the series of events leading up to the end

C. Will usher in the end and bring history to its consummation, its goal

D. Makes everything you do meaningful

1. **Matthew 24:14** (NASB95) — 14 “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.”
2. Want the end to come?
 - a. Bring back the Lion King, the Lamb of God
 - b. Proclaiming the gospel to the nations
 - c. So that every creature will worship the Lamb
 - d. So that men from every tribe, tongue, people, nation will join in the worship that you delight to give to the Lamb!