

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES:

Now the action begins. We are still in the Throne Room (“Central Control” of the Universe!)

*<sup>1</sup> And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup> Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” <sup>3</sup> And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.*

- “*scroll*” – books as we know them were not devised until the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Everything was written on scrolls at the time of John. The entire book of Revelation is estimated to have been on one 15 foot scroll.
- “*written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals*” It was not normal for a scroll to be written on both sides. Generally this implied a title deed, will or some other legal document where the document was on one side, and the terms were written on the back side (who was authorized to open, to whom it applied, etc.). Roman law required these documents be sealed with 7 seals. A 7-sealed scroll would have been recognized as most likely a title deed to property.
- Some have suggested this was a **title deed to the earth** – (Jeremiah’s purchase of land, a scroll sealed and stored away for later, when they returned to the land, Jeremiah 32). The deed to the earth was first given to Adam, he lost it to Satan, now Jesus will redeem it. He is the only one “worthy” (authorized) to open it.
- “*And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.*” This document required a man, a kinsman of Adam (Boaz was Kinsman-Redeemer for Ruth, a type for Jesus). Note they looked in three different places for the kinsman...IN heaven, ON the earth, UNDER the earth. Lots of speculation about what “under the earth” might mean. The angel has questioned “in a loud voice” who is worthy?

*<sup>4</sup> So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. <sup>5</sup> But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”*

- “*...I wept much...*” John realizes what this document is, and devastated that no one could open the scroll, or so it seemed to him.



- The fact that no one was worthy shows the unworthiness of man, and then as the Lamb steps forward, the great worthiness of Jesus. John is temporarily heartbroken.
- *“...one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to lose its seven seals.’”* There IS someone worthy – the Lamb of God. It is interesting that Jesus is not mentioned by name, but by His titles. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is from Jacob’s blessing of his sons in Genesis 49:9-10, specifically Judah. Jesus, in human form, is a direct descendant of David, His “root.” Jesus has indeed “prevailed:” *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”* John 16:32-33
- In the first 3 chapters of Revelation Jesus has been referred to by 24 different titles. Each of these has been about His present role, and as they are revealed to the Church. From this point on in Revelation, we will see only His Jewish titles emphasized. This is one more indicator that the Church is not around at this time of the Tribulation and the Jews will become the focal point, taking center stage at this point in history. God has turned His attention back to the Jews, and to His former covenants and promises.

*<sup>6</sup> And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup> Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.*

- *“...stood a Lamb as though it has been slain...”* – John was looking for a lion, but sees a Lamb! He is the Lamb of God, the ultimate sacrifice at His first coming. He is the Lion, the victor, at His second coming. Note the Lamb still looks like He was “slain.” Jesus still had the marks of His death.
- *“seven horns”* – horns are a symbol of power. Seven is perfectly complete. Jesus has complete and perfect power. He is the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. He is equal to God Almighty.
- *“seven eyes”* – Perfectly complete vision, all-seeing.
- *“seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth”* – God’s message is for the entire world. He sends His Spirit to everywhere and everyone.



- **The Lamb takes the scroll from the hand of the Almighty on the throne.** From now on it is the “*throne of God and of the Lamb.*” They occupy heaven’s throne together. Jesus is indeed qualified. He IS God.

*<sup>8</sup> Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. <sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying: “ You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”*

- Now the living creatures and the elders fall down again to praise God, the first set of praise of three. (*This is their function here!*)
- **“each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”** Harps are the psalmist’s instrument, an instrument of praise. Remember we have said that scripture usually interprets itself. In this verse, you don’t have to look far to find what the incense is. Incense refers to our prayers. This incense will be seen again later in chapter 8. Prayer is the way we are enlisted as partners in God’s work. Every time we pray the Lord’s prayer... “Thy Kingdom come...”
- **“new song”** – this is a common term, especially in the Psalms. There are a lot of new things in Revelation: names, Jerusalem, songs, heavens, earth, and all things. A new song refers generally to a new work of God. In this case, it is the New Covenant, the song of Redemption. In chapter 4 we had the song of Creation. Now the new work of Redemption is celebrated in song.
- **“You are worthy...for You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”** Credentials for His “worthiness.” Note this is a song for mankind (the redeemed), not for angels. The elders are NOT angels. Blood was required for payment. When Jesus died, He uttered the words in English “it is finished.” Literally this was *tetelestai*, literally meaning “paid in full.” Redemption is for every race, every language, every national and political social group.
- **“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”** – The redeemed as priests and kings was promised at Sinai. In the OT, priests were from the tribe of Levi, kings from the tribe of Judah. Only 3 groups are priests AND kings: Jesus, Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:14) and us! We will reign on earth with Jesus during the Millennial Kingdom (Jesus promised this, see Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:28-29; 2 Timothy 2:12)



*<sup>11</sup> Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, <sup>12</sup> saying with a loud voice: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”*

- **“...voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”** – Note singular “voice.” They are speaking as one unit, undivided in praise. The Greek word for “ten thousand” is *myrias*, which literally means “myriads upon myriads.” John did not count these angels! This indicates a number too large to be counted. The host of heaven is praising here. In the OT (especially 52X in Zechariah!) God is referred to as “Adonai Elohim Tsavaot” – Lord God of Hosts.
- **“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain...”** – worthy is *axios* in Greek, meaning deserving, due reward, literally “of proper weight.” Jesus was the only one “just right” to redeem mankind and the entire earth. There is a song titled “Worthy is the Lamb” in Handel’s Messiah. When asked about the inspiration for his work, Handel referenced Revelation chapters 4 and 5 and said he “looked into the glory of heaven.”
- **“to receive POWER and RICHES and WISDOM, and STRENGTH, and HONOR, and GLORY and BLESSING!”** – There are 7 things listed here to be given to Jesus. These are 7 attributes of Jesus, He already owns all these things, but they are also 7 things we GIVE Him. If we have any power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory or praise, we readily give it to the Lamb (24 elders who threw down their crowns.) The list of 7 indicates that all these attributes are perfectly complete in Jesus.

<sup>13</sup> **And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”**

- **“And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying....”** – This is EVERY created thing, every creature, every human dead or alive will join this song. EVERY tongue will confess... **“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** (Philippians 2:9-11)

- This is the third song in chapters 4 and 5: **4:9-11** has 3 attributes (glory, honor, power) symbolic of the Godhead, Trinity – song of Creation (acknowledges the persons, work of God). **5:12**, 7 attributes, perfectly complete – song of redemption (acknowledges old and New Covenants, work of redemption); **5:13** has 4 attributes, 4 representing all of creation acknowledging His worthiness. *Read Psalms 146-150, especially 148!*



- **“Blessings and honor and glory and power...”** 4 attributes, this word “power” is different than the one in the second song. That word was *dunamis* in Greek, meaning inherent power and authority. This word is *kratos*, which means dominion and might. Together they mean ALL power, of any kind, anywhere.

- *“...to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”* – both God the Father and the Lamb receive and share the praise. Jesus is placed on the same level as God the Almighty.

*<sup>14</sup> Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.*

- The final Amen to these two chapters that show an increasing crescendo of praise. It is like the overture before a concert. It establishes God’s worthiness and authority to open the scroll and begin the proceedings of judgment and final redemption. He has the right to commence judgment, and redemption. This judgment will begin in chapter 6.
- The word *“said”* implies continuous action. These creatures continue praising into eternity.

