

Revelation 5

The Scroll and the Lamb

1 Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, "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."

6 And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,

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

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!"

13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Glory of Christ in Redemption

Revelation 4 and Revelation 5 should be read as one scene in two parts. Part one focuses on the weightiness of God as king of the universe because He created it. Part two focuses on the weightiness of Jesus as king of the redeemed because he has redeemed them by his blood. The short application of the two chapters is that the church, the angels, and all of creation worship God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit because of who He is and because of what he has done to save His people.

Revelation 5 introduces us to the concept of the scroll sealed seven times. This imagery will play out as we continue in Revelation over the next several weeks. Many Bible scholars disagree on what the scroll is. All of their ideas, however, point to the sovereignty of Jesus over the earth and over history. The important thing about the sealed scroll (and all other imagery in apocalyptic literature) is that we shouldn't get too caught up in what the scroll is and much as we think about what the scroll represents. Jesus is king and there is no king who is capable of taking his place as the Lamb on the throne.

- Are there any images from Revelation 4 & 5 that are particularly confusing to you?
- Are there any images that are particularly striking in helping you to understand the Trinity?
- How do these images relate to the rest of the Bible?

The theme of the throne scene is worship. One definition of worship to give attention to the weightiness of God. One image from nature that may reflect the throne scene comes from a beehive. Bees seem to live haphazard and chaotic lives. They fly from flower to flower with no rhyme nor reason. They crawl every which way all over each other in the beehive. Experienced beekeepers, however, know how to find the queen of the hive when they open it up. In midst of seeming chaos there is order amongst the worker bees when they are in close proximity to the queen.

I can't help but think this was the experience of John. The world seems evil, chaotic, and far from the control of God. But as the curtain is pulled back and John is able to see the throne, he is able to realize that all of creation and angels too numerous to count have no greater business than to shout praise and glorify the triune God.

- How is your personal worship?
- How is worship in your family?
- Do you struggle grasping the magnitude of what Christ accomplished on the cross?
- How are you able to remind yourself of the cross daily and see Jesus for who he truly is?