

The Majesty of Christ

Revelation 5:1-7

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March 24, 2024 a.m.

Introduction: Review with me again what we have considered previously here in the Book of Revelation. Chapter 1:19 gives us a three-part outline of the Book. We are now looking at the third section of the Book, which is chapters 4-22. Chapters 4 & 5 introduce us to the Divine Judge. Last time we saw the depiction of God's holiness in 4:2-5 (its reality), the declaration of God's holiness in 4:6-9 (its recognition), & the demonstration of God's holiness in 4:10-11 (our response). That response includes verse 11, *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory & honor & power: for Thou hast created all things, & for Thy pleasure they are & were created."* The response to God's holiness is our worship of Him as our Creator. Beginning with chapter 5 we respond with the worship of our Redeemer, Christ Jesus. Consider with me this morning the majesty of Christ as we focus on His first coming (as a sacrificial Lamb) this Palm Sunday, leading us into our communion service. Next Sunday we will focus on Him as the Sovereign Lion, as we observe Easter Sunday. Our attention this morning is simply on this: The seven-sealed-depicted book (5:1-4) & the three-fold-described Lord (5:5-7).

I. The seven-sealed-depicted book (:1-4) – [*"biblion"* - our word "Bible"]

A. The scroll:

1. Who holds it? God the Father.
2. What is it? - a scroll with 7 seals.
 - a. "The book surely is that which contains the world's destiny, & its contents are revealed to us pictorially as the seals are broken" (Leon Morris).
 - b. "The message of the scroll is part of God's Word, & the seals on the scroll are a part of God's time-table of judgment upon a world of sinners" (Nutz).
 - c. The title deed to the earth itself > The earth is permanently God's possession by right of creation (Psalm 24:1-2). Adam lost his dominion over the earth & Satan became the *"god of this world"* (II Corinthians 4:4).

B. The strong angel (:2)

1. Who is he? Gabriel? (his name means "strength of God").
2. What says he? *"Who is worthy to open the book, & to loose the seals thereof?"*

C. The sorrowing John (:3-4)

1. No man worthy (it must be a man since it was man's lost estate) - "...men & angels are powerless to see & control their destinies" (Nutz).
2. Now John *"wept much"* – "continued weeping" (imperfect tense); indicates a noisy grief or wailing. No fulfillment possible – no one able to expel the usurper & reclaim the earth.

II. The three-fold-described Lord (:5-7)

A. *"The Lion of the tribe of Judah"* (:5) - Christ our Sovereign - [speaks of His second coming] (An elder is speaking, not an angel? A redeemed saint? *"Weep not"* or *"Stop wailing!"*)

1. Genesis 49:9-10 > "Jacob prophetically gave the scepter to Judah & made it the tribe of kings" (Wiersbe).
2. "The image of *'the Lion'* speaks of dignity, sovereignty, courage, & victory" (Wiersbe).
Note: Judah's name means *"praise"* – "God was praised for him (Gen. 29:35), praised by him, & praised in him; therefore his brethren shall praise him" (Henry).

B. *"The Root of David"* (:5) – Compare, *"...I am the root & the offspring of David..."* (22:16).

1. Speaks of His roots *in* David (emphasis on His humanity).

2. States that He is *"Root of David"* (emphasis on His deity).

Note: This refers to Isaiah 11:1, 10. Thus "linking Christ to the Davidic line (II Sam. 7:12-16).

But Christ is greater than His father David (Mat. 22:41-46) & will one day sit on David's throne to rule in the Kingdom age (Lk. 1:32-33)" (Levy).

Summary: This One who is *"the Lion of the tribe of Judah"* & *"the Root of David"* is said to have *"prevailed to open the book, & to loose the seven seals thereof."* He has *"prevailed"* – overcome; conquered; obtained victory. "The word points to Christ as completely triumphant, & the aorist tense of the original may well indicate a victory once & for all" (Leon Morris). "Christ secured the right to open the scroll based in His Messianic office, holiness, & redemptive death on the cross" (Levy).

C. *"A Lamb as it had been slain"* (:6-7) - Christ our Savior - [speaks of His first coming]

1. His appearance (:6) > John looks for the Lion & sees a Lamb.

a. The depiction - "Christ is often portrayed in the N.T. as a slain lamb (Jn. 1:29; Ac. 8:32; I Pet. 1:18-19) who still possesses the scars of His death (the crucifixion)" (Levy).

b. The description - "The seven horns & seven eyes may be representing the infinite perfection of the deity of the Lamb. John observes that the Lamb exercises authority upon the earth through His deity" (Nutz). [Note: Seven is the number of perfection. "We have here perfect power (7 horns), perfect wisdom (7 eyes), & perfect presence (7 Spirits). The theologians would call these qualities omnipotence, omniscience, & omnipresence; & all three are attributes of God" (Wiersbe).]

2. His action (:7) > "The Lamb came to take the title book, & the One on the throne gave it to Him, thus acknowledging before the universe that the slain, yet living, Lamb was the world's Redeemer" (Morris).

Conclusion: Consider the fact that Christ is referred to 28 times in the Book of Revelation as the Lamb. "The symbols of a lamb & a lion seem to be incongruous, but in reality they complement each other, representing Christ's victorious redemptive work on behalf of mankind & His victorious resurrection & rule... Christ paid the redemptive price to regain the title deed to mankind's lost inheritance. In the future, He will take possession of His inheritance (the earth) & exercise sovereign rule over it" (Levy). Here on Palm Sunday we are reminded of Christ's first coming as portrayed in Isaiah 53:7, *"He was oppressed, & He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, & as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."* This coming Friday we will observe what is traditionally called "Good Friday." We recognize Christ's vicarious death on the cross for our sin. We partake of the symbols representing His broken Body & shed Blood. As we do so this morning, might we call to mind the words of I Corinthians 11:26, *"For as often as ye eat this bread, & drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."* As we celebrate this ordinance together, we recognize the death, burial, resurrection, & coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. Can you share in these elements because you know that you are saved, that you have been born again? Following this time of proper instruction, let's take time for a prayerful examination. Do you have the assurance of your salvation? And are you willing to acknowledge any sin that hinders your fellowship with the Lord or His people? Then we can enjoy a time of thankful meditation, as we reflect upon the pain that Christ suffered, the price that He paid, & the purchase that He made. Let's pray together...