

Christ Redeeming That Which Was Lost

Revelation 5

In 1664 John Milton published his epic poem entitled Paradise Lost. The original version consisted of ten books with over ten thousand lines of verse. It is an epic built around the biblical story of the Fall of Man: the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angel Satan and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Milton stated his purpose in Book I. It is to "justify the ways of God to men."

Milton "did not at first plan to write a biblical epic." Since epics were typically written about heroic kings and queens (and with pagan gods). Milton originally envisioned his epic to be based on a legendary Saxon or British king like the legend of King Arthur.

But having gone blind in 1652 and suffering emotionally after the early death of his second wife, Katherine Woodcock, in 1658, and the death of their infant daughter. He was moved to write an epic poem about something with a historic basis, and no doubt it was something that helped him lay hold on a future hope. Though his work is based on biblical events. His poem takes many liberty's.

But as we turn to the final book in the New Testament, we are faced with the crystal-clear reality of Jesus, the Lamb of God reclaiming what mankind lost in the fall.

Most of us here understand that we live in a lost and upside-down world. It is upside-down because humanities rebellion has attempted to dethrone God from their lives in order to live as though they were the king, the captain of their own soul.

Psalm 2 talks about this

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. ⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure. ⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."

Throughout history there have been many pretenders to earth's throne. Some have sought to conquer and rule the world.

The first and most powerful and notorious usurper was Satan. After his rebellion against God was crushed and he and his angelic followers were thrown out of heaven, he became the "god of this world."

He has since inspired a host of humans to try their hand at conquest: Nebuchadnezzar of ancient Babylon, Darius of the Median and Persian Empire, Alexander the Great and the Greek Empire, The Roman Emperors, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler. And in the future Satan's most satanically possessed human will attempt to conquer the whole world. That one is known as the Anti-Christ. All of the men listed above, and a whole host of lesser lights have one thing in common: they failed.

There is only One who has the right, the power, and the authority to rule the earth: that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He will one day take back what is rightfully His. No one else is worthy or capable of ruling the world—no evil man, no good man, no demon, and no holy angel.

Revelation 5 introduces Jesus Christ as earth's rightful ruler. He is pictured about to return to redeem the world from sin, Satan, death, and the curse. He is the central theme of this book.

In Chapter 4 we saw the vision of the throne of God. In it we saw the indescribable majesty of the throne. Flashes of lightning and peals of thunder. The seven-fold glory of the Holy Spirit, the Cherubim around the throne and the 24 Elders and more.

As we enter Revelation chapter 5 we find opening phrase "**And I saw.**" In the Greek, John uses this phrase 31 times in this book. The phrase is translated "**and I saw**" or "**and I beheld.**" It marks the important transitions of things in this revelation, and stresses his eyewitness account. For example . . .

Rev. 5:2 – "**And I saw a strong angel** proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?"

Rev. 5:6 – "**And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne** and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been

slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

Rev. 5:11 – “**And I beheld**, and I heard **the voice of many angels** round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.”

Rev. 6:1 & 2 – “**And I saw** when **the Lamb** opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. ² **And I saw**, and behold **a white horse**: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.”

What does John see in Revelation 5:1? There is a book in the right hand of the One seated on the throne. It is a scroll. A long piece of papyrus or animal skin rolled from both ends into the middle.

It was sealed with seven seals. This is not an uncommon sight. Roman contracts such as title deeds, rental and leasing agreements, marriage contracts, releasing of slaves, bonds etc. were often sealed with multiple seals.

Generally, one would find on the outside (*or on the backside*) of the scroll is listed all parties involved in this contract. The breaking of the first seal would reveal the signature of the witnesses. The more witnesses the more important the contract. The breaking of the second seal would also reveal the summary of the contents and so forth.

What John saw in God’s hand was the title deed to the earth. Unlike other deeds, it does not detail what Christ will inherit, **BUT rather how He will regain His rightful inheritance**. Each seal reveals another stage of how He will reclaim the earth.

There are three natural divisions in this chapter. In Rev. 5:2-4 we find the question, “Who is Worthy?” In Rev. 5:5-7 we find the only “One worthy” stepping forward. He is the Lion from the tribe of Judah, and the root of Jesse. Finally, in Rev. 5:8-14 we find the Worthy One exalted.

WHO IS WORTHY? - REV. 5:2-4

“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘**Who is worthy** to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?’ ³ And no man in heaven, nor in

earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.”

It was a loud voice so that his proclamation would be heard through-out the universe. “Who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof?” And no one came forward.

The question was, “who has the innate, virtuous worthiness of character?” “Who has the divine right to break the seals?” “Who has the power to defeat Satan and his demon hosts?” “Who has the power to wipe out sin and its effects?” “Who has the power to reverse the curse on all of creation?”

In Revelation 5:3 we find no one was found worthy. The powerful archangels like Michael or Gabriel could not answer. All the righteous men of all ages could not answer such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, James, John, Paul, etc. No one in the heavenly host were worthy.

John began to weep bitterly (Revelation 5:4).

“And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”

The Greek word for wept is *Klaio*. It is the same word used when Jesus wept over Jerusalem. It expresses a strong, unrestrained emotion. John wept because he wanted to see the world rid of evil, sin and death. He wanted to see Satan vanquished and God’s kingdom established on earth. He wanted to see Israel saved and Christ exalted.

Remember John lived to see Jerusalem destroyed in 70 A.D. At that time 1.1 million Jews were massacred. He was aware of the intense persecution coming upon the church, especially upon the seven churches of Asia Minor. He also knew how they were affected with sin.

Everything from His perspective was going from bad to worse.

These are the tears of centuries. Adam and Eve sinned. As a result, they lost paradise and were driven out of the Garden of Eden. Then came the hardship of the curse of sin followed with Abel’s murder.

These are the tears of the saints through the ages suffering hardships, heartaches, trials, disappointments and death. To compound all this, no one was stepping forward to take the scroll to redeem God’s creation.

REV. 5:5-7 - THE WORTHY ONE

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. ⁶ And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. ⁷ And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

Stop Weeping [*Weep not*] (Rev. 5:5). The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has prevailed. These are two Messianic Terms.

The first term, “The Lion of Judah” comes from Genesis 49:8-10.

“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father’s children shall bow down before thee. ⁹ **Judah is a lion’s whelp**: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? ¹⁰ **The sceptre shall not depart from Judah**, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

The prophecy states that out of the tribe of Judah would come a strong fierce and deadly ruler—the Messiah. Because of this prophecy the Jews expected to be liberated from the heavy hand of Rome. They mistook God’s timetable.

The second term, “The Root of Jesse” is a messianic title found in Isaiah 11:1.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

It predicted that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah through the lineage of King David. The Messiah is the One worthy to take the scroll because He is the rightful heir to the throne.

Notice Jesus’ visage in this passage – Rev. 5:6

“And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, **stood a Lamb** as it had been **slain**, having **seven horns** and **seven eyes**, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

First Jesus appears “as a Lamb.” The Greek word for lamb is *arnion*. It is the term used to describe a little lamb or pet lamb. It is the same phrase used during the Passover when the Jewish people were told to gather the sacrificial Lamb.

Four days prior to the Passover the Jewish family would choose the lamb to be sacrifice. They were required to keep the lamb close to them, like a household pet for four days before sacrificing it on the eve of Passover. This assured the lamb would be without blemish when they sacrificed it.

In the Old Testament the Messiah is only referred to as a lamb once - Is 53:7

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: **he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

In the New Testament Jesus is called the Lamb 4 times between Matthew’s gospel and the book of Jude. But in the book of Revelation Jesus appears as the Lamb 31 times.

But He is not an ordinary Lamb. In Rev. 5:6 He is standing **as if slain**. – His wounds are clearly seen. **His seven horns** symbolize strength and power. Seven horns represent perfect absolute power. **His seven eyes** denote perfect omniscience. The **Seven spirits** represent His fullness of knowledge.

Jesus takes the scroll to take back what is rightfully his (Rev. 5:7).

“And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

All of heaven breaks out in praise in Revelation 5:8.

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

REV. 5:8-14 - THE WORTHY ONE IS EXALTED

The spontaneous outburst of worship results from the realization that the long-anticipated defeat of sin, death, and Satan is about to be accomplished and the Lord Jesus Christ will return to the earth in triumph and establish His glorious millennial kingdom.

Four things will be righted. The curse of sin will be reversed. The believing remnant of Israel will be saved. The church will be honored, exalted and granted the privilege of reigning with Christ and Christ will be seated on His throne ruling and reigning.

The worship of the 24 elders and living creatures (Rev. 5:8).

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

Notice the **harps** and **golden vials**. **Harps** (stringed instruments) were often played in the OT while prophesying. Many believe this is a reference to all the unfulfilled prophecies will now be fulfilled. The same with the **golden vials** – prayers of the saints. All the answered prayers for justice will now be answered.

The New Song of Redemption (Rev. 5:9-10).

“And they sung a new song, saying, “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; ¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.””

The elders here are obviously speaking because holy angels have no need to be redeemed. The elders are not only speaking of themselves but all believers throughout the ages. This redemption has provided believers with wonderful benefits: Believers become part of God’s kingdom. God has taken us out of the kingdom of darkness and placed us into the kingdom of His dear Son [Col. 1:12-14; 1 Thess. 2:12].

In Revelation 5:10 believers are made priests before God [Ex. 19:5-6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9]. Doing the work of a priest means telling people about the gospel of Christ. Note: These benefits signify that believers have access to God [Heb. 4:14-16]. The present priesthood of believers is a foreshadowing of when they will have total access and perfect communion with God.

The Voice of the Angels (Rev. 5:12-14).

“And I [John] beheld. . .” [5:11a] “I heard the voice of many angels . . .” [5:11b]

Added to the voices of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders in chapter 4 are the voices of an innumerable host of angels joining the choir of praise. The vast host emphasizes Christ's death in providing the perfect redemption. **This heavenly host counts Christ worthy to receive seven things** – power, riches, wisdom, honor, glory and blessing [5:12].

In Revelation 5:13 all creatures everywhere now join in this great choir of praise.

“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, heard I saying, ‘Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’”

This great hymn culminates with all creation singing endless praise and worship to God the Father and His Lamb, Jesus Christ [Ps. 69:34; 150:6]. Creation cannot hide their joy as their ultimate redemption draws nigh [Rom. 8:22-23].

Revelation 5:13 seems to carry John even beyond the Tribulation to the Great White Throne Judgment when those who have voluntarily rejected him will one-day worship Him before they are cast into the Lake of Fire [Phil 2:9-11].

This chapter ends with the four living ones saying “Amen” meaning “so be it” while the twenty-four elders once again are prostrating themselves in worship to God the Father and His Son.

The heavenly scene of chapters 4 & 5 gives heaven's perspective on the terrible judgments to come upon the earth, Christ's authority to reign and the punishment of sin by a holy and righteous God. What a tragedy for those who meet Christ as their Judge instead of their Redeemer.