



REVELATION

FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE LAMB

Session 08

Worthy is the Lamb!
Revelation 5:1-14

Dwelling in the Word

1. Prayerfully read through Revelation 5:1-14 and reflect on the following questions: 1) What words, phrases, or images stood out to you? Why? 2) What does this passage communicate to you about God? 3) How would you like to respond to what God may be desiring to accomplish in you?

Digging Deeper

1. The presentation of Jesus as the “Lamb that was slain” is the central and centering vision of the book of Revelation. Michael Gorman comments, “In his exaltation Jesus remains the Lamb, the crucified one. He participates in God’s identity and reign, making him worthy of worship, as the slaughtered Lamb, and only as such. This is the consistent witness of the New Testament: that the exalted Lord remains the crucified Jesus. And this one is the true face of God” (p. 111). In what ways does Christ as the Lamb of God “reconfigure” or “revision” how you understand the identity of God?
2. The legitimacy of Christ’s messianic reign is emphasized by the description of Jesus as the “Lion of Judah” (Gen 49:9-10) and the “Root of David” (Isa 11:1-10). Read the OT passages and reflect how they shape the people’s expectations of the coming messiah. How does the picture of Jesus as the “Lamb that was slain” modify our understanding of the messiah?
3. Lamb imagery brings up the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12), the Suffering Servant who is led “like a lamb” to the slaughter (Isa 53:7), as well as the description of Jesus as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29). What significance does this picture of Jesus have for you?
4. The cross—here symbolized as the faithful death of the slaughtered Lamb—is both the source and the shape of our salvation. In regards to the latter, what difference does it make to understand ourselves as “followers of the Lamb that was slain”? (Read Phil 2 for Paul’s perspective on following a crucified Lord).

For Groups

1. One of the consistent themes we see in these beginning chapters of Revelation is worship, particularly worship through song that includes voices that represent all peoples. As you start your group time together, begin by listening (or singing along) to one of these worship videos (search on YouTube for “How Great Is Our God” or “The Blessing”).
2. Spend time as a group writing your own song of worship & praise. What are the things you would personally, and as a group, want to praise God for?
3. If Jesus as “the Lamb that was slain” gives us the clearest picture of what God is like, what implications does this have for how we understand God? For how we understand how we understand and exercise power as followers of the Lamb? Discuss some practical ways this may impact the way we live in the world.
4. Verse 8 pictures “gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.” NT Wright comments, “The ordinary, faithful, humble prayers of Christians here on earth appear in heaven as glorious, sweet-smelling incense.” As you take time to share the joys and the burdens within your group that you’re wanting to pray for, remember that God does hear them. Envision your prayers rising to heaven as smoke rises from incense.

Living it Out

1. Revelation 5 describes three waves of worship that ripple out from the Lamb who is worthy. Can you incorporate an act of worship into your daily rhythms this week? Perhaps by reading the three proclamations of worship from Revelation 5 aloud, or writing a new song or statement that reflects Jesus’ worthiness?
2. When you pray this week, try to envision your prayers as incense that fills golden bowls collected and presented as an offering before Jesus our Lamb standing at the center of the throne. How does this change how you understand prayer?
3. The act of worship is an act of submission, an act of giving allegiance to someone or something that you deem worthy to ascribe worth. It is about how we order our lives and our loves. Spend some time in reflection this week on what implications the act of worshipping “the Lamb that was slain” could have on your life.



WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN!

Revelation 5:1-14
November 12, 2023 | Tyler Williams

APPROACHING THE VISION

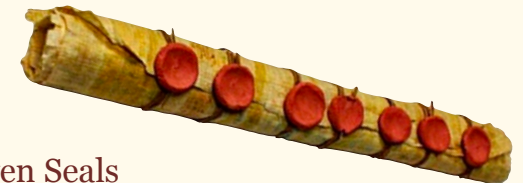
- Chapters 4-5 belong inseparably together as the interpretive key to the entire book; and they form the introduction for chapter 6.
- God as Creator: The Throne of God (4:1-11).
- God as Redeemer: The Lamb of God (5:1-14).
- The Lamb is Worthy to Open the Scroll (6:1-17).

APPROACHING THE VISION

The glimpse into the Heavenly Throne Room is to answer the question, “to whom does the earth belong?” “Who is the true ruler of the world?”

*Father God the Creator
& Jesus, the Lamb who was slain,
are on the Throne!*

WHO IS WORTHY?



A Scroll with Seven Seals

- “What must take place” (4:1), i.e., God’s plan of redemption that has been set in motion by Christ’s death and resurrection.

WHO IS WORTHY?

“Who is worthy?” to make the will of the living God known and to put it into effect?

- Background found in Daniel 7 and 12, as well as Ezekiel 2-3 and Isaiah 29.

“But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside” (5:3-4).

THE LION OF JUDAH



“Then one of the elders **said** to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals” (5:5).

- The Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9-10) and the Root of David (Isaiah 11:1) — both underscore the legitimacy of Christ’s messianic reign.
- He has triumphed!

THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

“Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the centre of the throne...” (5:6).

- Contrast between what John hears, and then what he sees: Instead of a Lion, he saw a Lamb!
- Lamb imagery brings up the Passover Lamb (Exodus 12), and the Suffering Servant who is led “like a lamb” to the slaughter (Isa 53:7).

THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

“The shock of this reversal discloses the central mystery of the Apocalypse: God overcomes the world not through a show of force but through the suffering and death of Jesus, ‘the faithful witness’ (1:5)... Jesus conquered through suffering and weakness rather than by might... The sufferer is the conqueror, the victim the victor.”

— Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the NT*, 174.

THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

“The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (5:6).

- The seven horns represent perfect power.
- The seven eyes represent perfect perception, i.e., the Holy Spirit (Rev 1:4; 3:1; 4:5).

THE LAMB IS WORTHY!



THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

God's power is redefined and symbolized through:

- The self-giving and sacrificial love of the Lamb, who is slain to redeem people of every nation for God (image used 28x in Rev).
- The sword of Jesus' mouth, which is the message of the Gospel (1:16; 19:15, 21).

THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

“When the slaughtered Lamb is seen ‘in the midst of’ the divine throne in heaven, the meaning is that Christ’s sacrificial death *belongs to the way God rules the world.*”

— Richard Bauckham, *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 64.



THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

Not: the Lion *AND* the Lamb
But: the Lion *IS* the Lamb!



THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

- God shares his sovereignty and honour with Jesus the Messiah.
- This Jesus, who is worthy of worship has exercised his messianic office and power by laying down his life as an offering, demonstrating power in weakness (1Cor 12:9).
- The exalted Lord remains the crucified Jesus (John 20:26-29; Gal 2:19-20).



THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

“In his exaltation Jesus remains the Lamb, the crucified one. He participates in God’s identity and reign, making him worthy of worship, as the slaughtered Lamb, *and only as such*. This is the consistent witness of the New Testament: that the exalted Lord remains the crucified Jesus. And this one is the true face of God... Understanding the reality of the Lamb as Lord—and thus of Lamb power—terminates, or should terminate, all such misconceptions of divine power and justice.”

— Michael Gorman, *Reading Revelation Responsibly*, 111.



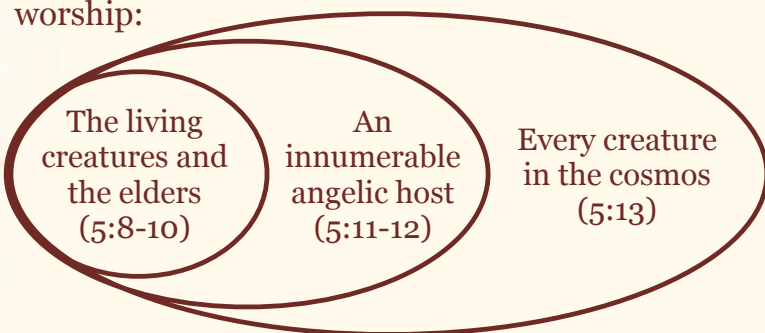
THE LAMB IS WORTHY!

The slaughtered Lamb reveals God and also reveals what it means to be faithful to God.

- The cross—here symbolized as the faithful death of the slaughtered Lamb—is both the *source* and the *shape* of our salvation!
- All of this is vivid reenactment of Philippians 2, where Christ’s sacrificial life is an example of how we should live as his followers.

THE HEAVENLY WORSHIP

Concludes with three scenes of ever-expanding worship:



THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

The living creatures and the elders sing a “new song” and proclaim the Lamb is worthy because:

- of his sacrificial death on the cross;
- through which he purchased a people; and
- made them “to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth” (5:9-10; 22:1-5).

THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

An innumerable host of angels (5:11-12).

- Sevenfold praise of the “Lamb who was slain.”
- “Power, honour, and glory” (also given to God in 4:11).
- To which are added: “wealth, wisdom, strength, and praise.”

THE HEAVENLY LITURGY

Every creature in the cosmos (5:13).

- While no one in the entire universe was able to open the scroll (5:3), now “every creature” and all parts of the created order “and all that is in them” praises *both* God and the Lamb.
- This picture of universal worship anticipates the consummation of all things when all things are reconciled to God (Col 1:20; Phil 2:9-11).

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, featuring a cluster of flowers in shades of orange, yellow, and white, with some green leaves. The flowers are rendered in a soft, painterly style.

RESPONSE

The *only* appropriate response to this vision of our crucified Lord and Saviour, here pictured as the Lamb that was slain, is to worship.

- This vision of worship becomes a call to worship as only God and the Lamb are worthy of our worship!
- “The act of worship rehearses in the present the end that lies ahead” (Eugene Peterson, *Reversed Thunder*, 70).