**THE LION, THE LAMB, AND THE SCROLL**

[**Revelation 5:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/1/s_1172001) **(NKJV) 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.**

* 1. **I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll**:
     1. The focus of [**Revelation 4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/4/1-11/s_1171001) was **the throne**.
     2. Here, John begins with reference to the throne, but now shifted his focus to the **scroll** held by the enthroned Lord.
  2. **Written inside and on the back**: This means that this scroll was unusual. It wasn’t common practice to write on both sides of the scroll.
     1. This means that whatever information was on this scroll, that there was a lot of it, almost more than the scroll can contain.
     2. Ancient scrolls were read *horizontally*, not *vertically*.
        1. The rolls of the scroll were on the left and the right, and the writing lay in narrow columns about 3.15 inches (8 centimeters) wide, written on a substance somewhat like brown paper.
        2. The scroll was held in the left hand, and unrolled with the right; as the reading went on, the previously read portion was re-rolled.
        3. On such a typical scroll, the Book of **Revelation** would fill a scroll approximately 15 feet (or 4.5 meters) long.
  3. **Sealed with seven seals:** When a roll was finished, it was fastened with strings and the strings were sealed with wax at the knots.
     + 1. This scroll was **sealed with seven seals**; there were seven strings around the scroll, each string sealed with wax.
       2. These were not seven writings each separated by a seal; but seven seals all set upon one scroll. All the seals must be opened before the scroll could be read.
       3. **A scroll written**: Through the centuries, people have suggested many different ideas what this **scroll** is, and what is **written** on it. It’s important to remember that whatever is on this scroll, no one except Jesus was and is worthy to open it

[**Revelation 5:2-4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/3-4/s_1172003) (NLT) **And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: “Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it. Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it.**

* + - 1. *To know what is written on it and be revealed to all, the scroll* ***must*** *be opened.*
    1. The best solution is to see the scroll as “**God’s will**, his final settlement of the affairs of the universe.”
       1. (Barclay) This is based on the idea that customarily, under Roman law, wills were sealed with **seven** seals, each from a witness to the validity of the will.
       2. (Walvoord) “Roman law required a will to be sealed **seven** times as illustrated in the wills left by Augustus and Vespasian for their successors.”
       3. (Walvoord) “The **seven** sealed book therefore is the comprehensive program of God culminating in the second coming of Christ.”
    2. **In the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll**: Remember the emphasis is not on the *content* of the scroll, but on its *seals* and the *One* who is worthy to take it.

**Who is worthy to open the scroll?**

[**Revelation 5:2-4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/2-4/s_1172002)(NLT) **And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: “Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it. Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll and read it.**

* 1. **A strong angel**: We don’t know who this angel is.
     1. Many have suggested that it is Gabriel, but we *don’t know*.
     2. Nonetheless, this angel issued a challenge to all creation: **Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?**
     3. This is a *challenge* that **no one** can answer because **no one is worthy** to open this particular scroll.
  2. **No one *in heaven* or *on the earth* or *under the earth* was able to open the scroll, or to look at it**: John could not have said it any stronger.
     1. It was as if the **strong angel** looked through the entire universe to find someone worthy, and did not find ***anyone*** worthy to even ***look at*** the scroll.
     2. There was no answer to the strong angel’s challenge. Someone above the order of created beings must determine the course of history and only **God** can unfold this plan.
  3. **So I wept much**: John **wept** either because a previous promise to see the future may now be denied ([**Revelation 4:1**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/4/1/s_1171001)), or more likely, because the ending/conclusion of history would be postponed.
  4. **No one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it**: To look upon the scroll, one must have the right to open the scroll and possess it — and no creature **was found worthy**.

**Who is Worthy - to open the scroll.**

[**Revelation 5:5-7**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/5-7/s_1172005) **(NKJV) 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.” 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. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.**

* 1. **Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah**: One of the **elders** (not an angel) rescued John from his grief, showing him the one who **has prevailed to open the scroll**. This One was the great figure of Old Testament prophecy: **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David**, the Messiah of Israel and of the Gentiles.
  2. The Messianic title **Lion of the tribe of Judah** comes from [**Genesis 49:9-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/gen/49/9-10/s_49009), [**Isaiah 31:4**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/isa/31/4/s_710004), and [**Hosea 11:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/hos/11/10/s_873010).
     1. The title **Root of David** comes from [**Isaiah 11:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/isa/11/10/s_690010) and is repeated in [**Revelation 22:16**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/22/16/s_1189016).
  3. (Trapp) says that a Lion is a fitting image of our Messiah,
     1. For the excellency of his strength.
     2. For his heroical spirit.
     3. For his principality; the lion is the king of beasts.
     4. For his vigilance; the lion sleepeth with open eyes.”
  4. **And I looked, and behold… stood a Lamb**: Because of the elder’s announcement, John expected to see a Lion, but saw a **Lamb** instead. John even used the specific word for a little lamb.
     1. The Lamb is presented in a way both sympathetic and powerful; He is living but He still had the marks of previous sacrifice upon Him (**as though it had been slain**).
     2. When men want symbols of power, they conjure up ferocious beasts and birds of prey such as those that represent nations and sports teams.
        1. But the representative of the kingdom of heaven is a **Lamb**, representing humility, gentleness, and a sacrificial love.
     3. The **Lamb** looks **as though it had been slain**. It’s hard to describe what John saw, but this **Lamb** had the marks of sacrifice on it.
     4. The coming judgment begins in [**chapter six**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/6/1-17/s_1173001) and is dictated and administrated by the **Lamb** who has already offered an escape from judgment by taking judgment upon Himself.
     5. The judgment will come upon a world that ***hates*** the **Lamb** and all that He stands for, and all those that ***reject*** His offer of escape.
  5. **As it had been slain**: The idea is that the sacrifice of Jesus is still *fresh* and *current* before God the Father. There is nothing stale or worn-out in the work of Jesus on the cross. Thousands of years later, it is *still fresh* as the day He died on the cross.
     1. (Trapp) “This form of speech is put to show the continual recent virtue of Christ’s death eternally effectual before God, as whereby once for all he hath purchased eternal redemption.”
  6. **As it had been slain**: (Clarke) “As if now *in the act of being offered*. This is very remarkable; so important is the sacrificial offering of Christ in the sight of God that he is still represented as being in the very act of pouring out his blood for the offences of man. This gives great advantage to faith; when any soul comes to the throne of grace, he finds a sacrifice there provided for him to offer to God. Thus, all succeeding generations find they have the *continual* sacrifice ready, and the newly-shed blood to offer.”
  7. **Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth**: Even though the marks of His sacrifice were evident, the Lamb was not presented as an object of pity.
     1. Throughout the Scriptures, **eyes** suggest knowledge and wisdom, and **horns** suggest power.
        1. This **Lamb** has knowledge, wisdom, and power:
     2. The Holy Spirit is not only the *Spirit of God* (in the sense of being the “Spirit of the Father”), but also *the Spirit of Christ* ([**Romans 8:9**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rom/8/9/s_1054009)).
     3. The seven *eyes of the LORD* are a picture of omniscience drawn from the prophet Zechariah ([**Zechariah 4:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/zec/4/10/s_915010) **and** [**3:9**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/zec/3/9/s_914009)).
  8. **Then He came and took the scroll**: No ***created*** being was found worthy to take the scroll, but the Lamb can take it. His rank, character and ability to take the scroll and open it (*and thus dictate the destiny of all creation*) has been permanently demonstrated by His work on the cross.

**Praise to the Worthy One, The song of the elders and the cherubim.**

[**Revelation 5:8-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/8-10/s_1172008) **(NKJV) 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. 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, And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”**

1. **The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb**: When the Lamb took the scroll, the response was immediate. High-ranking angels and redeemed man joined to worship the Lamb.
2. **Each having a harp**: The **harp** is “Properly, a **zithern** or **kind of guitar**, played either with the hand, or with a pick.”
   1. (Alford) Worship in heaven is accompanied by music. As one might expect, this is the passage that started the idea that people in heaven will have harps.
3. **And golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints**: With their **golden bowls full of incense**, the elders symbolically presented the prayers of the saints.
   1. However, they did not intercede for the saints, functioning as mediators for God’s people.
   2. We are reminded that *there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus* [**1 Timothy 2:5**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1ti/2/5/s_1121005).
4. **Golden bowls full of incense**: In this we see how precious the prayers of the saints are to God. He regards them as a sweet-smelling incense, as if set in precious **golden bowls**.
   1. The connection between prayer and incense is shown in [**Psalm 141:2**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/psa/141/2/s_619002)(NKJV) **Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice**.
   2. Incense has a pleasing aroma, it ascends to heaven, **But** it needs ***fire*** before it is of any use.
5. **And they sang a new song**: The elders sang a **new song**, for mercies that are forever new.
   1. (Poole) “By a *new song* is either to be understood as an excellent song (for new songs were usually most valued,) or (which pleaseth me best) *new* as to the matter of it; for the servants of God under the Old Testament could not bless God for the actual redemption of man by the blood of Christ, but only rejoice in hope, embracing the promises seen afar off by the eye of faith.”
6. **You are worthy**: In the days of the Apostle John, Roman Emperors were celebrated upon their arrival with the Latin expression ***vere dignus***, which is translated **You are worthy**. Here the true *Ruler of the world* is honored.
7. **For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth**:
   1. In the praise of [**Revelation 4:11**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/4/11/s_1171011), the emphasis was on God’s work of *creation*. Here, the emphasis is on His work of *redemption*.
   * The song honors the *price* of redemption: **for You were slain**.
   * The song honors the *worker* of redemption: **have redeemed us**.
   * The song honors the *destination* of redemption: **have redeemed us to God**.
   * The song honors the *payment* of redemption: **by Your blood**.
   * The song honors the *scope* of redemption: **every tribe and tongue and people and nation**.
   * The song honors the *length* of redemption: **have made us kings and priests to our God**.
   * The song honors the *result* of redemption: **and we shall reign on the earth**.
8. **Kings and priests to our God**: Believers are **kings** because of their royal birth and their destiny to reign with Jesus. They are **priests** because they need no mediator other than Jesus Himself.
   1. (Spurgeon) “When a fellow comes forward in all sorts of curious garments, and says he is a priest, the poorest child of God may say, ‘Stand away, and don’t interfere with my office: I am a priest; I know not what you may be. You surely must be a priest of Baal, for the only mention of the word vestments in Scripture is in connection with the temple of Baal.’ The priesthood belongs to all the saints.”

**Countless angels join in.**

[**Revelation 5:11-12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/11-12/s_1172011) **(NKJV) 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, 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!” I heard the voice of many angels around the throne**:

[**Revelation 5:8**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/8/s_1172008)The angels and the elders fell down before the Lamb together. [**Revelation 5:9-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/9-10/s_1172009)Yet it would seem that only the elders sang the song of the *redeemed*, Because in no place does the Bible does it tell us of any redemption of angels.

1. **the voice of many angels around the throne** rose up with the praise of the Great Redeemer.
2. In [**Revelation 4:9-10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/4/9-10/s_1171009), the angels prompted the elders into worship. Here, the elders seem to prompt the angels. It is a wonderful cycle in heaven, with the angels and elders encouraging each other to more and more praise.
3. **The number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands**: These numbers are not to assert that there are a trillion angels, but that the number of them is overwhelming, ***innumerable***.
4. **Worthy is the Lamb who was slain**: In their song, the angels did not offer praise for their redemption. This is because angels are not *subjects* of this redemption, but they are careful observers of it, and are therefore able to praise God because of it ([**1 Peter 1:12**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1pe/1/12/s_1152012) **and** [**Ephesians 3:10**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/eph/3/10/s_1100010)).
   1. The angels can clearly see the greatness of God’s work in redeeming fallen men, so in response they credit **power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing** to the Lamb. In the same way, we can praise God for the way He works in the lives of people.

**All creation praises the Father and the Lamb.**

[**Revelation 5:13-14**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/rev/5/13-14/s_1172013) **(NKJV) 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!” Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.**

1. **Every creature**: John couldn’t be any more complete in his description. Truly, this is *every creature* — **in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them**.
2. **Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb**: This combined worship of the Father and the Lamb is strong testimony to the deity of Jesus.
   1. (L. Morris) “There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Lamb is to be reckoned with God and as God.”
   2. (Clarke) “Now if Jesus Christ were not properly God this would be *idolatry*, as it would be giving to the *creature* what belongs to the *Creator*.”
   3. (Spurgeon) “Depend upon it, my hearer, you never will go to heaven unless you are prepared to worship Jesus Christ as God. They are all doing it there: you will have to come to it, and if you entertain the notion that he is a mere man, or that he is anything less than God, I am afraid you will have to begin at the beginning and learn what true religion means. You have a poor foundation to rest upon. I could not trust my soul with a mere man, or believe in an atonement made by a mere man: I must see God himself putting his hand to so gigantic a work.”
3. **Fell down and worshipped Him**: The ancient Greek word for **worshipped** is literally “*to prostrate*” or “*to lay before another in complete submission*.”
   1. The scene may be that the elders **fell down** to their knees, then laid themselves before **Him who lives forever and ever** as an expression of their total submission and worship.
   2. (Clarke) “This is the eastern method of *adoration*: first, the person worshipping fell down on his knees; and then, bowing down touched the earth with his forehead. This latter act was *prostration*.”
4. **Forever and ever… worshipped Him who lives forever and ever**: The living God reigns eternally.
   1. Caesars come and go, including those who persecute God’s people.
   2. But the Lord God **lives forever and ever** and is *ever* worthy of our praise.