

CHAPTER 5

Revelation 5:1-5

[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.”

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Chapter five begins with God the Father holding a scroll. And the details that John gives us is that it is written on both the front and the back and sealed with seven seals.

The seven seals, again mean that it is completely sealed.

The Greek word *biblion* here indicates a rolled up piece of parchment. These rolled up pieces of parchment would typically be legal documents. They were sealed with wax in order to prevent tampering where the seal edges met.

A seal that was broken signified that the writing on the scroll was no longer valid and the agreements within the scroll needed to be agreed to once again.

It is important to consider what this scroll is. The Bible doesn't explicitly state what it is, but John gives us a clue with what he says about it. He says that there was writing on both sides of the scroll.

A scroll with writings on both sides of the scroll signifies a land deed. Typical scrolls such as the Torah or other types of writing were only written on the inside, but land deeds were written on both sides.

The outside of the land deed had a summary of the contents within.

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What would this land deed before for? It would be a land deed for Israel. Since 605 BC, Israel had been set outside of their promised land and had been given over to the Gentiles. So during this Age of the Gentiles, the land has been given to the Gentiles. As we enter into this time of tribulation, the land is about to be given back to Israel as the Age of the Gentiles comes to an end.

The tribulation is meant to bring the nation of Israel to the realization that Jesus is the Messiah and to restore the land of promise back to them. These seals need to be broken by a magistrate. So the question is who can do it?

We would think that God the Father could do it, but when we understand the idea of land deeds, He is unable to do so because He is a party in the agreement, He gave the land to Israel initially. What is needed is someone who can serve as a proper mediator. Someone who could represent both God and man in this case.

John says that no one could be found worthy to do so. Worth in this case doesn't mean good enough, but rather appropriate. Understanding the scroll's implication, allows us to understand why John was moved to tears.

At first he thought no body would be able to return this land to Israel and to end this Age of the Gentiles. But then an elder says that there was one found who was worthy. The elder says the Lamb who has overcome has been found worthy to open the scroll.

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Revelation 5:6-14

[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. (ESV)

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Notes:

John describes Jesus appearing in this scene as the Lamb standing as though it had been slain. And this is an idiom of speech indicating that He appeared in His resurrected, glorified form.

John says that He appeared with seven horns and seven eyes.

Seven horns representing absolute authority.

Seven eyes representing all-seeing.

These details represent the Holy Spirit who is sent out into the earth. And this detail indicates that the Holy Spirit is most likely sent back to the earth after being removed with the church.

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Jesus is found worthy because He has overcome. Overcoming means that He is victorious over something or someone.

We know that Jesus has overcome the world. He has overcome Satan. He has overcome death.

Through Jesus' death and resurrection He has overcome it all. Through this He has overcome the enemy's dominion on earth.

By His death and resurrection, Jesus is worthy to play mediator between God and man to judge.

Jesus removes the scroll from the Father's hand and as He does so, all of those gathered in the throne room begin to praise Him.

Their praise speaks of His authority. It speaks to where the opening of these seals will eventually lead, the establishment of His Kingdom on Earth.

This chapter ends with incredible praise for God with an innumerable amount of angels rejoicing and praising Him.

This deed has seven seals that will begin to be opened. This is a process that happens over the next several chapters. As a seal is opened in heaven, something else happens on earth.

And John goes back and forth between what He sees in heaven and what he sees on earth.