

The Book of Revelation

Lesson 8 – Chapter 5

1. Key Verse is **Revelation 17:14** - “**These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings; and they [also shall overcome] that are with him, called and chosen and faithful.**”
2. Review of chapter 4
 - 2.1. God reigns from the center of the universe and is in complete control. All the other symbols reinforce this great truth and contribute to the power of its majesty and glory.
 - 2.2. The first thing John saw was a throne.
 - 2.2.1. That throne is a central theme of the book of Revelation.
 - 2.2.2. God is pictured in all his glory upon his throne. He is worshipped.
 - 2.2.3. There are only five chapters where the word "throne" is not found.
 - 2.3. John saw a figure seated upon the throne but he could not see his features through the dazzling lights that danced about the throne.
 - 2.3.1. **1 John 1:5** - **God is light, and in him is no darkness at all...**
 - 2.3.2. Jasper - A translucent stone of various colors
 - 2.3.2.1. **Rev. 21:11** - “brilliant”; “clear as crystal”
 - 2.3.2.2. Brilliant crystal reflects the dominant attribute of God the Father, his holiness, his perfection.
 - 2.3.3. Sardius - blood red in color -- a glowing, beautiful, blood-red stone. That, of course, immediately suggests the Son. His major characteristic is his willingness to shed his blood on our behalf, to give himself in redemptive atonement for our sins.
 - 2.3.4. The rainbow was the promise of grace.
 - 2.4. 24 elders
 - 2.4.1. In my opinion, the twenty-four elders represent the twelve patriarchs of the Old Covenant and the twelve apostles of the New Covenant. This would be in harmony with **Revelation 21:12-14**, which shows the name of the patriarchs on the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem and the names of the apostles on the twelve foundations of the city.
 - 2.5. Lightning and voices and thunders
 - 2.5.1. Symbols that indicate the majesty and power of God as in **Exodus 19:16**, and judgments on the wicked (**Ps. 18:13-14**), proceed from the throne.
 - 2.6. The four creatures represents some attribute associated with God. The lion suggests strength; the calf (ox), service; the man, intelligence; and the flying eagle, swiftness.
 - 2.7. The living creatures, joined by 24 elders, worship God by singing to him and honoring him and giving glory and thanks. This is the same way that Christians must worship God today. His eternal nature is again emphasized.
 - 2.7.1. The casting of the crowns before the throne showed complete submission to God.
 - 2.7.2. Only Deity is to be worshipped.
 - 2.8. The emphasis of chapter 5 is the majesty of Jesus Christ..

- 3. Revelation 5:1 - And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back, close sealed with seven seals.**
 - 3.1. Books with a cover and pages as it is known today did not appear until around the fourth century. This was a scroll, which was rolled up, and was written on both sides. Ordinarily, they just wrote on one side, but both sides could be written on.
 - 3.2. The focus is upon the scroll, sealed with seven seals in the right hand of him that sits upon the throne. The fact that it is written within and on the back signifies that the revelation it contains is full and complete (**Ezek. 2:9-10**).
 - 3.2.1. Why is it sealed? (seven seals on the end so that as the seals are broken the scroll is unrolled and the writings upon it can be read.)
 - 3.2.2. When we come to Chapter 6, the opening of these seals and unrolling of this scroll will reveal certain momentous events which begin to occur upon the earth. Then we will know exactly what this scroll signifies. But this continues on through chap. 6-9 and it is not until Chapter 10 that we find the scroll completely unrolled – and a clue is given to us as to what this scroll signifies.
 - 3.3. The picture is that it was full, complete. It was sealed with seven seals. This means one could not open the scroll to see what it said. The scroll represents God's eternal plan for the Christian Age. For it to be opened would not only reveal what was written in the scroll, but it would mean also that God's plan would be carried out. In this case, a part is carried out as each of the seven seals is opened. The number seven means completeness.
 - 3.4. It was written to indicate there is no way to change it. God has written it and there is no possibility that anyone can change it.
- 4. Revelation 5:2 - And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?**
 - 4.1. There follows a question uttered loudly by a strong angel for all creation to hear:
" ... Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof"
 - 4.2. Has any human ever had the ability to solve the problems of mankind?
 - 4.3. Do humans have the answer to reconciliation with God outside of the blood of Christ? NO!
 - 4.4. He does not ask who is strong enough to open the seals, but who is worthy to open the seals? The implication is who is good enough.
- 5. Revelation 5:3 - And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon.**
 - 5.1. No one living or dead was worthy to open the book.
 - 5.2. No one is found in all creation able (because not worthy)
- 6. Revelation 5:4 - And I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon:**
 - 6.1. Why did he weep?
 - 6.1.1. Perhaps it was due to a combination of things: the overwhelming emotional power of the scene, created in part by a sense of great urgency, and John's own sense of disappointment at the prospect of not realizing the promise of **Rev. 4:1**, concerning which he was already in deep anticipation.

- 6.1.2. John understood that if the book was not opened, God's will would not be carried out in connection with the church.
- 6.2. He wept and wept, he says, because no one could unseal the scroll or even look inside. No one knew how to go about it. None of the leaders of earth have a clue as to how to solve the issues that divide mankind and keep us from loving one another.
- 6.3. The imperfect tense of the verb implies he continued crying until one of the elders spoke to him
7. **Revelation 5:5 - and one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book and the seven seals thereof.**
- 7.1. The elder bids John to cease weeping because one (not of the created order) has "overcome" and thus has been deemed "worthy" to take the book and open its seals (**Rev. 5:9**).
- 7.2. The regal authority of Jesus is suggested by the descriptive "Lion" (**Gen. 49:9**).
- 7.3. He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. This is based on Genesis 49:9-10. The root of David is similar to Isaiah 11:1.
- 7.3.1. The idea is that the Messiah must be a descendant of David.
- 7.3.1.1. The Old Testament foretold the coming of the Messiah out of the tribe of Judah (**Gen 49:10; Heb 7:14**).
- 7.3.1.2. Jesus is viewed as the "Root of David." This is generally viewed as a reference to the fact that Christ was descended from the line of David.
- 7.3.1.3. Normally a root is the source from which the plant springs.
- 7.3.1.4. In **Rev. 22:16** Christ is both the "root" and the "offspring" of David – "root" seems to be different from "offspring."
- 7.3.2. These refer to Jesus Christ.
- 7.4. Jesus lived in the flesh and lived the perfect life.
- 7.4.1. He died upon the cross as the sacrifice, which satisfied the justice of God.
- 7.4.2. He arose from the dead on the third day triumphing over death and Satan.
- 7.4.3. He became the redeemer of mankind and the one worthy to open the book.
- 7.5. Christ is said to have "overcome."
- 7.5.1. The tense of the word indicates that the event has already been achieved. The victory was won at Calvary.
8. **Revelation 5:6 - And I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.**
- 8.1. John is expecting to see a Lion, but instead he sees a Lamb in the midst of those round the throne. It is the Lamb of God who was slain for the redemption of mankind, but the Lamb is risen from the dead and is alive forever more. These symbols give a symbolic insight into what is transpiring in heaven.
- 8.2. The immediate explanation given as to how the Lamb had overcome is that he had been slain, but was standing; that is, he had recovered.

- 8.3. Christ has the characteristics of a Lion; he is strong and courageous. He also has the characteristics of the Lamb, meek and humble. The Lamb indicates sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed himself for the redemption of mankind.
- 8.3.1. It is the Lamb of God who was slain for the redemption of mankind, but the Lamb is risen from the dead and is alive forever more.
- 8.3.2. The significance of his death and resurrection is reserved until **Rev. 5:9-10**, but it is already apparent that this is “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (**John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7**).
- 8.3.3. The Lamb is identified as the Messiah, prophesied (**Gen. 49:9; 1 Chron. 28:4; Isa. 11:1-10**), long expected in Israel and fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ (**Luke 1:32-33; Rom. 15:12; Heb. 7:14**).
- 8.3.4. **Acts 4:12 - And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.**
- 8.4. The seven horns and seven eyes of the Lamb are best understood in the light of **1 Cor. 1:24**: "... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (see also, **Deut. 33:17; Zech. 1:18-21; 3:9; 4:10**).
- 8.4.1. Seven signifies the completeness of the Lamb's power and wisdom.
- 8.4.2. The seven eyes represent the seven spirits of God (the Holy Spirit, **Rev. 1:4**). These were sent forth into all the earth.
- 8.4.2.1. The phrase “seven spirits,” as employed in the final book of the New Testament, is a symbolic reference to the Holy Spirit.
- 8.4.2.2. The numeral “seven” (hepta) corresponds to the Hebrew term sheba', related to saba, meaning to be “full,” “abundant.” Hepta (found 56 times in the Apocalypse — of the 88 in the New Testament) is the number that represents perfection or completeness.
- 8.4.2.3. The plural form “spirits” may suggest the diversity of his powers, or, in the context of chapters 1-3, his ministry within the seven congregations that were selected for illustrative purposes (there were more churches in Asia than the seven mentioned; **Colossians 1:2; 4:13,15-16**).
- 8.4.2.4. It is interesting to notice that in three of the passages cited above (3:1; 4:5; 5:6), the “spirits” are said to be “of God.” Thirteen times elsewhere in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is characterized as being “of God.” In two other texts the Spirit is described as being “of Jesus” or “of Christ” (**Acts 16:7; Galatians 4:6**).
- 8.4.3. The Lamb’s revelation is made by the Holy Spirit (**John 14:16-18**), thus the Spirit is sometimes designated as the Spirit of Christ (**Acts 16:7; Gal. 4:6**).
- 8.4.4. No one but an inspired writer would have used the Lamb as a symbol for Christianity.
- 8.4.5. Men use ravenous beasts; USA has the eagle; Russia, the bear; Great Britain, the lion; France, the tiger.

- 8.5. The vision shows great spiritual thought, victory through suffering. The seven horns indicate great strength and might. The seven eyes indicate perfect knowledge. Christ is all knowing.
- 8.6.
9. **Revelation 5:7 - And he came, and he taketh [it] out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne.**
- 9.1. The Lamb stands in the midst of the throne in association with the elders and the living creatures (**Rev. 5:6**). He approaches and takes the book from the right hand of the one upon the throne.
- 9.2. Christ is co-equal with God the Father and rules with him. He takes the book and executes God's will for the Christian Age. The church will be remembered and looked after. The enemies of the church will be defeated in the end.
- 9.3. Jesus understands humanity. He, therefore, is the One worthy to take the scroll and remove the seals. So John sees him here with the seven-sealed scroll in his hands.
- 9.3.1. **Hebrews 4:15-16 - For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help [us] in time of need.**
10. **Revelation 5:8 - And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.**
- 10.1. This dramatic action is followed by successive outbursts of praise, beginning with that of the living creatures and elders who fall down before the Lamb.
- 10.2. Each one has a harp (a symbol of praise, **Rev. 14:2; 15:2**), and golden bowls full of incense, the latter being identified as the prayers of the saints (**Rev. 8:3-4; Ps. 141:2; Luke 1:10**).
- 10.3. When Jesus takes the book, the living creatures and the twenty-four elders worship him. Verse eleven indicates they led the worship. Only God is to be worshipped, so this is further proof of the deity of Jesus.
- 10.3.1. The harp and golden bowls full of incense both symbolize the worship of Jesus and God in heaven. The golden bowls of incense are identified as prayers of the saints. This reminds one of Psalm 141:2.
- 10.3.1.1. Neither golden bowls of incense or harps were a part of the church in the New Testament, but they are a part of the description of heaven.
- 10.3.1.2. This verse may not be used as proof of instrumental music being acceptable in worship in the church, as this is neither the meaning nor the context.
11. **Revelation 5:9 - And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood [men] of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation,**
- 11.1. The song of the living creatures and elders is called "a new song" (Rev. 5:9), which is a designation for praise appropriate to the occasion of great

deliverance by God of his people and the subsequent, new existence into which their redemption has brought them (**Isa. 42:9-10; Ps. 98:1**).

11.1.1. They sang a new song. There are two words in the Greek for new - **neos** and **kainos**. **Neos** means new in terms of time. **Kainos** means new in terms of quality, there has never been anything like it before. In Revelation, **kainos** is always used.

11.1.2. This song is different from any like it before. This is a song of praise to Jesus. He is worthy to take the book and to open the seals and execute God's plan because of his death, burial and resurrection from the dead.

11.1.3. When Jesus died upon the cross, he purchased salvation for all men. This salvation is not thrust upon any man, it is offered to all men and women. In order to receive this salvation, men must believe in Jesus as the Son of God and obey him. Christ now has the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9-11).

11.2. The death of Jesus, and the victory achieved thereby, is a dominant theme in Revelation (**Rev. 1:5; 5:12; 7:14; 12:11**). The singing of a "new" song declared the worthiness of the Lamb to open the scroll.

11.3. The new song offered to the Lamb extols his redemptive work which declared him worthy to disclose the destiny of the very church he purchased with his blood (**Rev. 5:9-10; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:18-19**). This scene is fitting as a prelude to the opening of the seven seals, for the church is facing severe persecution.

11.4. The prayers of the saints ascend to the throne petitioning for the deliverance God is soon to grant (notice the sequence of action in **Rev. 8:4-5**).

12. **Revelation 5:10 - and madest them [to be] unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon earth.**

12.1. As a consequence of the blood which he shed, the Lamb was able to purchase a people for his own possession. Elsewhere this group is identified as the church of the Lord Jesus (**Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19-20**). Notice also that these purchased ones are a kingdom – a clear argument that the church and the kingdom constitute the same entity.

12.2. These citizens of the kingdom are from every nation, and they are serving as priests in the house of God (**Rev. 1:6; 20:6**). John then records that those purchased by Christ's blood reign now upon the earth.

12.2.1. For the second time in this song, it is pointed out that the redeemed belong unto God (See **1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; and 2 Peter 2:1**).

12.2.2. Under the New Covenant, every Christian is a priest (**1 Peter 1:19; 2:5, 9**).

12.2.3. Christ is now reigning as King (**Acts 2:36**).

12.2.4. The church is the kingdom (**Hebrews 12:22-28**).

12.2.5. When Jesus comes the second time, he will deliver the kingdom to the Father (**1 Corinthians 15:24**).

- 12.2.6. Thus Christians are now priests and are in the kingdom reigning now, not at some future point, certainly not a thousand-year reign. **Revelation 1:9** indicates the kingdom is now.
- 12.3. Note in **verse 10**, the King James Version mistranslates this verse. It should read, "and madest them [to be] unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon earth." ("They reign", present tense, not future).
- 12.4. It is the Lamb that has shed his blood to redeem the saints who answers the prayers of the saints by opening the book which reveals the destiny of the church and God's scheme of redemption which culminates in his judgment on the wicked (**Ezek. 2:10**) and his deliverance of the righteous.
13. **Revelation 5:11 - And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;**
- 13.1. John both saw and heard the heavenly host worshipping Jesus.
- 13.2. The thousands of beings were praising the Lamb because of his sacrificial death. As a result of that event, Christ is worthy to receive worship on account of his power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessedness.
- 13.3. ALL were worshipping the lamb.
14. **Revelation 5:12 - saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might and honor, and glory, and blessing.**
- 14.1. The seven qualities (power, riches, wisdom, might, honor, glory, blessing) belong to the Lamb by virtue of his divinity, but he "receives" them from the angels in their praise of him.
- 14.2. Notice there are seven traits perhaps suggests the complete adoration that is due the victorious Son of God.
- 14.3. The heavenly hosts worship Christ the Lamb in the same way they worshipped God the Father in **4:11**. They sing of seven things. The first four are characteristics of Jesus. The second three are the attitude of men toward Christ. All of these characteristics are listed elsewhere in the New Testament:
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| 14.3.1.1. Power | 1 Corinthians 1:24 |
| 14.3.1.2. Riches | 2 Corinthians 8:9 |
| 14.3.1.3. Wisdom | 1 Corinthians 1:24 |
| 14.3.1.4. Strength | Ephesians 4:10 |
| 14.3.1.5. Honor | Hebrews 2:9 |
| 14.3.1.6. Glory | John 1:24 |
| 14.3.1.7. Blessing | Romans 12:29 |
15. **Revelation 5:13 - And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things are in them, heard I saying, Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, [be] the blessing, and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.**
- 15.1. The angels are followed by the totality of creation that praises both the one on the throne (God) and the Lamb.
- 15.2. Four of the qualities already ascribed to the Lamb are now imputed to both. The four corresponds to the four divisions of creation (the heaven, the

earth, under the earth and the sea). He lists four places they were from, so the emphasis is upon every created being, similar to **Psalm 148**.

16. **Revelation 5:14 - And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.**
 - 16.1. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders started these songs of praise in **verse 10**; now they conclude it. They are continually saying, **Amen**.
 - 16.2. The Greek imperfect tense indicates past continuous action. “So be it.” They fall down and worship.
17. The entire universe is governed by the throne, that is by God the Father and Christ the Lamb. When Jesus ascended into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God (**Ephesians 1:20-21**). All things ultimately must glorify God. His will is carried out in the universe. God and Christ rule from heaven. Believers need not fear in times of tribulation, persecution and trials. God will not forget them, but will work all things together for their good (**Romans 8:28**).
18. Under the New Covenant, every Christian is a priest (**I Peter 1:19; 2:5, 9**). Christ is now reigning as King (**Acts 2:36**). The church is the kingdom (**Hebrews 12:22-28**). When Jesus comes the second time, he will deliver the kingdom to the Father (**1 Corinthians 15:24**). Thus Christians are now priests and are in the kingdom reigning now, not at some future point, certainly not a thousand-year reign. **Revelation 1:9** indicates the kingdom is now.