

REVELATION

The Enthronement of Christ

Revelation 5:4-6

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As the worship of God continued, John's focus of attention shifts from the Throne to a Scroll. It has 7-seals and is lying on the throne at the right hand of God.

-Background-

- In ancient Israel, thrones were more like couches - large enough for more than one person to sit on.
- To sit at the right side of the king was the highest place of honor.
- When an Israelite king came to the throne, he received 2 things:
 - A royal crown.
 - A scroll of the Covenant (book of Deuteronomy - Deut. 17:18-20). Possession of this Covenant Scroll and the ability to open and read it demonstrated the king's right to rule and judge the nation.

The idea of "sealing" suggests the hiding of God's word because of people's inability to understand it (Daniel 12:4, 9-10). The Jews of John's day believed, on the basis of Isaiah 8:16, that the scroll of the law (Deuteronomy) had been sealed at the time of the Babylonian Exile because of the people's disobedience.

Kingship "in the line of David" ended with the Babylonian Exile. It was at that time that the prophets began to speak of a future king, "from the line of David" who would be worthy to sit on the throne of David (Jeremiah 23:5-6; 33:15-22; Ezekiel 34:23-25; 37:23-28). The people longed for this king, who would sit on the throne of David, open the sealed book of the covenant and teach the people regarding the will of God.

-The Seven-Sealed Scroll-

- The scroll was a legal document that had writing on both sides:
 - The 10 commandments were written on both sides (Ex. 32:15).
 - Reminds us of Ezekiel's vision in Ezek. 2:9-10.

The scroll, then, is a legal document that concerns God's covenant with His people.

- To protect a document from tampering, it was rolled up, tied with strings, and sealed with wax on the knots. It was not uncommon for a document to be sealed with more than one seal and Roman law stated that a will or testimony had to be sealed with a minimum of 7 seals. As a result, the contents of the scroll could not be read until after the seals were broken.
- Only an authorized/worthy person could break the seals.

The Scroll of Revelation 5 was deliberately sealed and it could not be opened or read until an authorized person broke all the seals. What will follow then in chapter 6, is not a revelation of the contents of the scroll but the breaking of the seals. The contents of the scroll will not be known until after all the seals are broken.

A Mighty Angel raises his hand, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?"

"Worthiness," in John's day, was bestowed because of a unique qualification, such as an outstanding achievement or bravery on the battlefield.

All worship stops. John looks around.....

God the Father reigns on the Throne of the Universe and is worthy to receive glory and honor and worship, yet He cannot open the scroll. If God the Father cannot open the scroll than who can?

Sorrow fills John's heart and he begins to weep.

An elder comes to John, *"Do not weep! The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root and offspring of David, is able to break the seals and open the scroll because he has conquered!"*

When John turns around, he expects to see a mighty Lion, but what he actually sees is a Lamb, *"as having been slain."*

The person John sees is Jesus – the Lion AND the Lamb.

- Jesus is qualified to take the scroll and sit on the throne because of WHO He is:
 - First: He is of the line of David and from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:8-10; Matthew 1; Luke 3:23-31).
 - Second: He alone is equal to God (John 1:1-3, 14; Hebrews 1:3)
- The Lion – refers to WHAT Jesus did: He overcame.
- The Lamb – refers to HOW Jesus overcame: by choosing to be the Sacrifice. It is the cross that makes Jesus WORTHY. He has earned the right to open the scroll and reveal the story of the resolution to the Great Controversy between good and evil.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was standing at the center, surrounded by the 4 Living Beings and the 24 Elders.

Now John gives us an interesting description. Jesus has 7 horns (full authority) and 7 eyes (full discernment/intelligence), *"which are the 7 Spirits of God sent out into all the earth."*

----- It is interesting to note that, after this point, we will not see the 7 Spirits of God again in Revelation -----

The Enthronement of Christ took place at a specific point in time - Pentecost 31 AD. When Jesus became the legitimate ruler of earth, the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples – in full authority and discernment – to fulfill the promise Jesus made to them (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; 15:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4, 32-33; Romans 8:26).

Christ now approaches the Throne and takes the scroll.

By taking the scroll, Christ signified that a *transfer of authority* from Satan to Himself has occurred. When Adam sinned, Satan became ruler of this world (Luke 4:6; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). What Adam lost through disobedience – Christ regained through obedience! Victory over sin and Satan is assured, however, even though Satan has lost legal ownership of earth, he isn't going to give it up without a fight (we will explore that more in Revelation 12).

An anthem of praise and adoration arises from the heavenly assembly:

.... the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped – Revelation 5:8-14.

- **Ellen White {CTr 315}** - The Saviour was presented to John under the symbols of the "Lion of the tribe of Juda," and "a Lamb as it had been slain." Here the whole work of redemption was expressed. These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. As the Lion of Judah, Christ will defend His chosen ones and bring them off victorious, because they accepted Him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Christ the slain Lamb—who was despised, rejected, the victim of Satan's wrath, of human abuse and cruelty—how tender was His sympathy with His people who were in the world! And according to the infinite depths of His humiliation and sacrifice as the Lamb of God will be His power in glory as the Lion of Judah, for the deliverance of His people.

To John were opened the great events of the future that were to shake the thrones of kings and cause all earthly powers to tremble. He beheld the close of all earthly scenes, the ushering in of His reign who is to be King of kings, and whose kingdom shall endure forever. . . . He saw Christ receiving the adoration of all the hosts of heaven and heard the promise that whatever tribulation might come upon God's people, if they would but patiently endure they should be more than conquerors through Him that loved them. . . . He was now prepared to witness the thrilling scenes in the great conflict between those who keep the commandments of God and those who make void His law.