**The Coronation of Christ**

**Revelation 5:1-7**

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**Revelation chapters 4-5** share an interesting similarity with **Revelation** **chapter 1**. **Chapter 1** presents the vision of the Son of Man which expresses the Lord’s purpose in coming for judgment. That vision is the foundation for the following two chapters which record the Lord’s letters to the seven Asiatic churches. **Chapters 4-5** contain a similar “scene-setting” transition in John’s vision of the Throne Room. In **chapter 4** the symbolism aims to bring to our attention God’s absolute sovereignty over all things. **Chapter 5** shifts our focus from the Father and His surroundings, to the Father and the Lamb as the Lamb comes before the Throne to receive authority and dominion. **Chapters 4** and **5** describe the same scene and so I was tempted to read **chapter 4** as part of our introduction. However, there are a few other passages which I want to look at before we begin studying **Revelation 5** and I didn’t want to wear you down with too much reading. Instead, as a reminder of the scene set for us in **chapter** 4, we will briefly cover a diagram of the Throne Room found in William Hendriksen’s commentary “More Than Conquerors”.

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In this diagram, you have each element of the scene or group present within it as described in **chapters 4-5** represented by a numbered ring or an illustration.

**In the center sits the Father on His throne.**

**Ring 1:** The white sparkling diamond. (4:2)

**Ring 2:** The sardius. (4:3)

**Ring 3:** The emerald rainbow. (4:3)

**Ring 4:** The four living ones. (4:6)

**Ring 5:** The twenty-four thrones and elders. (4:4)

**Ring 6:** The “many angels”. (5:11)

**Ring 7:** All other creatures in the universe. (5:13)

**Also Notice:** Seven lamps and the sea of glass depicted before the throne. (4:5-6)

**The Lamb** stands between the Throne with the living ones on one side, and the twenty-four elders on the other. (5:6)

This diagram visualizes the overarching theme of these chapters which is the supremacy of the Throne in Heaven. The Throne is the ultimate seat of power in all creation, it is the first and ultimate source of authority, and the One Who sits upon it is sovereign overall. This is important as by the end of **chapter 5** the throne no longer belongs to the Father only, but is from this chapter on called “The throne of the Father and of the Lamb” see **Revelation 22:1**. Hendriksen goes on to explain this theme as the one primary lesson of these chapters and I thought what he said was worth sharing. He says:

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“Chapters 4 and 5 teach *one main* lesson. Unless we clearly grasp this point, we shall never see the glorious unity of the Apocalypse. We shall lose ourselves in allegorizing. That *one main* lesson may be expressed in the words of the Psalmist:

‘*Jehovah* reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits above the cherubim; let the earth be moved.’ **Psalm 99:1**

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The assurance of this truth should impart comfort to believers in the midst of fiery trials. Hence, this vision of the universe governed by The Throne precedes the symbolic description of the trials through which the church must pass, chapter 6. A very beautiful arrangement!”

From all of this we can summarize the main theme of **chapters 4-5** as: **The Throne Rules Over All!**

Hendriksen also explains how this vision is set in a heavenly version of a temple or a tabernacle scene. The throne room is the reality of the Holiest of Holies from the earthly tabernacle and by this vision we are dramatically taken beyond the veil to stand before the throne and witness Christ’s Coronation. Our portion of **chapter 5** focuses on The Lamb as He comes to the Throne and two passages from **Daniel chapter 7** struck me as relevant to this scene. These are:

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**Daniel 7:9-10 -** I watched till thrones were put in place, And the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

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**Daniel 7:13-14 -** I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

There’s not much I want to say about **Daniel 7:9-10** but I think it adds detail to the vision of **Revelation 4-5** and creates a more vivid picture in your mind. **Daniel 7:13-14** however will be helpful in our study of **Revelation 5:1-7**. It describes the same event but in a different and complementary way. Before we read **verses 1-7** of **Revelation 5**, I also wanted to read a passage from John’s Gospel, which we just covered in our scripture reading on Wednesday, as I was surprised to see how much of Jesus’ words there further explain what is happening in **Revelation chapter 5**. Jesus says in:

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**John 5:21-29 -** **For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.**

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Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. **For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.**”

We won’t say much more on this or the **Daniel** passage for now, but they will be helpful to us as we study our passage. With these things in mind, we will read **Revelation 5:1-7**.

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**Revelation 5:1-7 -** 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. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

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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.

This passage primarily focuses on two elements: **The Scroll** and **The Lamb**. Since these two elements are the focal point of this passage, they will be the main points of our examination starting with **The Scroll**.

**1. The Scroll**

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Last week, David had several difficult symbolic elements of this vision to explain, each having multiple theories. I get to use all his hard work and simply tackle the new elements mentioned in this passage. The scroll, much like some of the symbols David covered, has several proposed theories about its identity and its contents. We will start by examining a few of these theories and then look at the scroll itself within the passage. There are four main theories I came across and although there is some mystery about its identity and contents it is easy to choose the best fitting of these theories from the context of **Revelation chapters 4-5**.

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 **Identity and Content Theories:**

***Theory 1: A Book of Redemption (The Lamb’s Book of Life).***

Some view the scroll as the Lamb’s Book of Life containing the names of all true believers. However, the contents of this book are revealed in the following chapters with the opening of the seals and do not only deal with events pertaining to the redeemed but instead also especially pertain to judgment on unbelievers.

***Theory 2: The Old Testament.***

Others view the scroll as representing the Old Testament. Christ alone can unlock or open the true meaning of the Old Covenant since its prophecies and mysteries find their fulfillment in Him. This theory is at least consistent with the book of Revelation due to its focus on how Christ fulfills Old Testament prophecy. However, there are facts presented in **chapters 5-6** about this scroll and its effect on mankind which do not harmonize with such a conclusion.

***Theory 3: A Book of Future Events (The Great Tribulation).***

Still others view the scroll as containing punishments and terrifying events such as a future “Great Tribulation” leading up to Christ’s second coming and the final judgment. However, as you study you will see that the recorded events do not pertain only to future events at the end of time but include events from the past and from the time of John.

***Theory 4: A Book of God’s Plan of Judgement and Redemption as a Testament (A Covenantal Promise of Inheritance).***

The scroll is best understood as containing God’s plan of judgment and redemption. It is a testament in which judgement and redemption are its two conclusions depending on your response to the word of God. This has been set in motion by Christ’s death and resurrection but its events have yet to be finished. The fourth proposition is the best fitting according to the context of **chapters 4-5** and the rest of the book. The passage we read in **John chapter 5** also helps shed light on this as the most accurate conclusion.

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Looking at **verse 1**, we want to notice the details given to us about the scroll. One thing we need to realize is that it is not the identity of the scroll, or its contents, which are the focus of this scene, but the fact that Christ was authorized to take it, open it, and execute its contents. Notice the location of this scroll “in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne”. This is an indication of authority and so when we will later see the Lamb come and take the scroll, this is symbolic of this authority being given to the Lamb.

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 **Unusual Aspects of the Scroll:**

There are two details given about this scroll which are unusual. **Verse 1** says that it was “written inside and on the back and that it was sealed with seven seals”. Now, there is some discussion among scholars that the grammar could have meant that the scroll had writing on one side and was sealed on the back, like any normal scroll. However, there is not really a consensus one way or the other. If we take it to mean that this scroll had writing on both the front and back, as seems to be the case in most translations, then this is an unusual, though not unheard-of quality. Usually scrolls did not have writing on both sides, but there were various official or important documents of the ancient world which would follow this practice. Perhaps most notable are the similarities between the description and significance of this scroll when compared to Roman wills. I won’t go into detail about those, but you might look them up in your own studies. Most commentators note that this detail pertains to the importance, fullness, and comprehensiveness of the contents of the scroll.

The second aspect, that the scroll is sealed with seven seals, is the more perplexing quality. The reason this is so strange is that as each seal is opened, parts of the content of the scroll are revealed. Several commentators note that the word could easily be translated as “book” rather than as “scroll” and offer the explanation that each of the seals closed different groups of pages. I compared a few different translations and it was about 50/50 whether they would translate it as book or scroll. Whatever the case may be, the problem can easily be resolved when we remember that this is symbolic language, so we do not need to get lost in every detail of the imagery and sometimes we do not need to read too deeply into the descriptive terms. Even so, I thought that the two pictures I have on this slide were interesting enough to share, showing how a scroll could be sealed with seven seals and still be opened and read one part at a time.

 **Requirements of the Scroll:**

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Moving on to **verses 2-4** a strong angel asks, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” This is an interesting question as it implies there are some qualifications which anyone who wishes to open the scroll must possess. G. B. Caird in his commentary on **Revelation** says this:

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“It is to be noted that God will not Himself break the seals of His scroll and put its contents into operation. He has set this limit to His own omnipotence: Man’s destiny, and with it the destiny of all creation, must be achieved by man. The divine decree waits… for the emergence of a human agent, willing and worthy to put it into effect, one who will place himself unreservedly at the disposal of God’s sovereign will.”

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Caird’s comments are in accord with the overall teaching of the scriptures that it was necessary for the redemption of man to be accomplished by a man. We also see from the silence of this gathering that none of the beings of creation were worthy to come forward and take the scroll. Thus, a second requirement is that the one must not be a created being. Worthiness itself is one of the qualifications and it deserves a little explanation:

**Robertson’s Word Pictures** says: Worthy by rank and character, as well as by ability.

**Vincent’s Word Studies** says: Morally entitled.

Worthiness means moral worthiness, or sinlessness, and the ability to carry out the decrees written within the scroll. Worthiness regarding the redemption of man implies one final qualification which is: He must be victorious over death. The scriptures teach that the requirement of sin is death, so the one worthy to carry out judgment and redemption must be worthy through sinless death in atonement. Before we move on with our passage, try to imagine standing there in John’s place when no answer to the angel’s question was forthcoming.

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G. K. Beale in his commentary says:

“There is only silence in response to the angel’s question. No created being is able to step forward to open or read the book. This demonstrates the inability of any among God’s creatures to execute God’s plan of redemption and judgment.”

In response to this silence, John begins to weep. Until the Lamb steps forward, it seems to John that no one is worthy and so he cannot receive the knowledge of the revelation which he was told to expect. However long this silence lasted it must have felt like a heart-rending eternity for John as it seemed to him that God’s glorious plan would not be carried out. Beale in his commentary goes on to explain that:

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“This means for him that history will not be governed in the interest of the church and that there will be ‘no protection for God’s children in the hours of bitter trial; no judgments upon a persecuting world; no ultimate triumph for believers; no new heaven and earth; no future inheritance!’”

Here we are brought vividly to face the dark truth of mankind’s situation: There is no one among God’s creation worthy to step forward and carry out His judgment and plan of redemption. How terrible must it have felt to stand where John stood that day and to feel this overwhelming sense of helplessness and despair.

**2. The Lamb**

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At this point our passage makes a beautiful transition as our focus shifts from the scroll to the Lamb and one of the Elders turns to John and says: “**Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed…**” This Elder who spoke to John applies two Old Testament titles to Christ the Lamb: The Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David. These titles are important as they both bring to the mind the conquering Messiah. Both Old Testament terms speak of the Messiah overcoming His enemy through judgment. **The Lion of the Tribe of Judah** comes from **Genesis 49:9-10** which says:

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**Genesis 49:9-10 -** Judah is a lion’s whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

This passage portrays Christ as the Sovereign King. Its focus is on His absolute power and authority. The rule of His people shall never depart from Him. This is what we read earlier in **Daniel chapter 7**. The second phrase, **The Rood of David**, comes from **Isaiah 11:1-10** which says:

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**Isaiah 11:1-10 -** There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

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His delight is in the fear of the Lord, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

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 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord As the waters cover the sea.

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 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.”

This passage should remind us of what we read in both **Daniel chapter 7** and **John chapter 5** at the start of our study. Here the nature of Christ’s rule and kingdom are described in more detail. These pictures present a wonderful and glorious picture of Christ as the conquering King. This passage in **Isaiah** also describes Christ’s rule as that of the ideal King.

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 **Lamb or Lion?**

As we continue into **verse 6**, we notice something interesting. The Elder told John, “**Behold the Lion**” yet as John turns and looks, he sees **The Lamb**. In his commentary G. B. Caird says:

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“It is always worthwhile to examine closely the connection between what John **hears** and what he **sees**, and it is particularly unfortunate that in most editions and translations a paragraph break has been inserted between verses 5 and 6, so that we miss the full impact of the juxtaposition of images: **One of the elders said, ‘…The Lion… has conquered…’ Then I saw… a Lamb**.

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What John hears is couched in the traditional messianic imagery of the Old Testament; what he sees constitutes the most impressive rebirth of images he anywhere achieves.”

This contrast of conquering Lion and slain Lamb is a beautiful picture of the Messiah. Both pictures come from the teaching of the Old Testament and equally describe the Lord. It is sad to think how His people who rejected Him were surely expecting this mighty conquering Lion and failed to recognize the truth of the Passover Lamb being prepared for their atonement. Jesus, in His atoning death and subsequent resurrection takes on both roles of Lion and Lamb and in His death, He conquered His enemy. Therefore, He is not only called a Lamb in this passage but a slain Lamb. The slain Lamb is the only one worthy and qualified to approach the Father’s throne and receive the scroll from His hand. As if this Lamb were not strange enough to see when you expect a Lion, as well as being slain yet alive, there are two more descriptive features of this Lamb recorded in **verse 6** which are worthy of attention.

 **The Lamb of God**

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**Verse 6** says the Lamb has, “Seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.” Some believe that the horns, the eyes, and the Spirits are separate features of the Lamb. However, I think the wording of the passage makes it clear that the seven Spirits, while using the number seven as symbolic, are an explanation of either the eyes or both the horns and eyes. Some commentators say that the seven Spirits only describe the Lamb’s seven eyes meaning that He possesses the omniscience of God. Others see that the phrase could explain both the horns and eyes expressing the Lamb’s possession of God’s omnipotence as well as His omniscience. I lean toward this second understanding as it fits the wording of the verse well and it harmonizes perfectly with what we read in:

**1 Corinthians 1:23-24 -** … we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The Lamb John sees is the only one Who meets the requirements to approach the throne and open the scroll of God. This brings us to our final verse for consideration.

**Conclusion:**

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The Lamb steps forward and takes the scroll, in this same action being exalted by the Father, claiming His victory over His enemies, and receiving His Kingdom, Power, and Authority. We have one final question which we haven’t answered: **Could a lamb literally take a book out of anyone’s hand?**

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Technically, yes. If it wanted to, a lamb could take a book out of someone’s hand. I know this is a picture of a goat but the only one I could find of a lamb was too blurry to use and I also know this wasn’t the point of Johnny’s question. This vision of the Throne Room is full of symbols and this final question serves to remind us not to overanalyze everything too literally.

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At first, I was disappointed that my section ends on a cliffhanger as what comes next is such an exciting passage to study. This great Heavenly host bursts out in celebration with the new song of the redeemed. I quickly realized just how much there was to cover in **chapter 5** and knew I wouldn’t have had time to do justice to the entire chapter. Yet, this study doesn’t feel complete without at least reading the rest of the chapter. Continuing with **verse 8** the Bible says:

**Revelation 5:8-14 -** 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.”

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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!” 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.

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I hope from what we’ve covered you’re as excited as I am to hear Eric cover the rest of this chapter especially the three awesome songs sung by the multitude of creation. I hope I have done justice to this profound and vivid scene which teaches us so much about God’s plan of redemption while at the same time reminding us of His righteous judgment on those who reject His word. Christ the Lord became the sacrificial Lamb, slain on the cross for my sins, for your sins, and for all the world so that God’s redemptive plan could take effect. Today, God is calling for all who will hear to come to Him and receive pardon for their sins. If you have not obeyed His call, we will gladly assist you in that. Also, if you are one of His children but have transgressed His will and have sin in your life which needs forgiveness and would like to call on us to pray with you and assist you in repentance, come forward while we sing.