

The Book of Revelation
Revelation 5 (NIV)
“The Deed To Earth”

Introduction

Then I saw in the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne. And when He had taken it, 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 God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because You were slain, and with Your blood You purchased for God persons 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 were saying:

“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, saying: “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

As John continued to describe his heavenly vision, he saw a scroll in the right hand of The One Who sits upon heaven’s throne. Then he heard a mighty angel crying out with a voice that reverberated throughout all of heaven. The angel asked a question that demanded an answer:

“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”

For what must have seemed an eternity to John, no one answered the angel’s question. There was dead silence in heaven. It must have terrified John when no one came forward to open the scroll.

It is important to understand why this apparent absence of a “worthy one” would have created such anxiety to this beloved disciple of Jesus. For you see, the scroll in the right hand of the One Who sits upon the throne is of vital importance. And if no one was found worthy to take the scroll and open it, then there would be no hope left for this fallen world.

And why is this scroll so important? In order to answer this question we must first identify what the scroll represents. Many have attempted to theorize the significance of the scroll in God’s right hand. Some have argued that it represents His Word, *The Bible*. But this is not a valid argument, for there are

many who not only possess, but also frequently open their *Bibles*. God gave His Word to us, His people. We are definitely not worthy to possess it, but we have most certainly been allowed to do so.

No, the scroll does not represent the Word of God. What it does represent is the title deed to the earth. For you see, in those days, the deeds for property were rolled up and sealed in such fashion. So what the angel was asking, when he cried out for a “worthy one” is simply this: “Who is the rightful owner of the earth?” And there is only One Who is worthy to claim the title deed to this world, and it is none other than Christ Jesus, Who gave His life to redeem us from the bondage of sin. The earth is His inheritance, and the first thing that He will do when He takes possession of it, is to cleanse it. Just as a person who buys an old house gives it a thorough cleansing before he moves in, Jesus will cleanse the earth of all its filth before He comes to reign.

Just as we have seen in the previous chapter, there are rumblings and flashes of lightening surrounding the throne of God. A war is about to begin. It is a war between heaven and the earth. Satan has, for a short time, been allowed free reign in this world, but the world most certainly does not belong to him! The rightful owner is coming to evict the devil, and to cleanse “His house” and set up His kingdom. In order to do this, all He need do is take possession of His inheritance; to take the scroll from the right hand of God The Father and let the eviction process begin!

Let us look together at this wondrous event in heaven as The Lamb of God steps before the throne to claim what is lawfully His. As we watch the events unfold before our very eyes we shall see, *The Weeping One, The Worthy One, and The Worshipping Ones*. Immense sorrow shall turn to joy when Christ takes center stage and reassures us all of the hope that is only found in Him!

The Weeping One

When the angel asked for the worthy one to step forward and open the scroll, for a short time there was a deafening silence in all of heaven. Not a single one of the elders was found worthy, nor any other created being was qualified to come and take the scroll from the hand of The Father. The glassy sea separates Him from all of creation. Or as King David once wrote:

***Who may ascend the mountain of The LORD? Who may stand in His holy place?
The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or
swear by a false god.*** ***Psalms 24:3-4***

My friends, there is only One Who is worthy to stand in the presence of a holy God. And He alone is worthy to claim the deed to the earth, and His Name is Christ Jesus. But the wonderful truth is, that if we place our faith in Him, then we will exchange the filthy rags of our own “good deeds” to be covered in His spotless perfection. It is only when we are clothed in Him, can we hope to stand in the presence of The Father, for Jesus is the source of true righteousness. It is for this reason that only He is worthy to take the scroll. This earth belongs to Him.

As all of heaven remained silent in response to the angel’s inquiry, John began to weep uncontrollably. For if no one could open the scroll, then everything that is wrong with this wicked world can never be set right. John had witnessed, in his own lifetime, the wickedness of mankind. He was there when the Jewish leaders had crucified his LORD. He had witnessed firsthand the destruction of Jerusalem and her temple being razed to the ground. He had seen all of his fellow disciples executed for their faith, and he alone was the last remaining one from the original twelve. And even he had been exiled, sent far away from all those that he loved and held dear. This old man, who had given his life to serve His LORD, could no longer contain his emotions, when no one in heaven immediately came forward to set things right. John began to weep uncontrollably.

Then one of the Elders went to John and told him to stop crying. I LOVE this verse! We have already established exactly who these elders are. They are representatives of the raptured Church of Christ. So it was a church member who put his hand on John’s shoulder and assured him that there was nothing to cry about. For there most definitely is One Who is worthy to take the scroll and open its seals. The time for crying is over and the time for rejoicing is at hand! For The Worthy One was about to step into view.

The Worthy One

I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly One like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached The Ancients of Days and was escorted before Him. He was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will not be destroyed. **Daniel 7:13-14 (CSB)**

One of my favorite components of Daniel's prophecy concerning The Son of Man (The Christ) in **Daniel Chapter 7** is the way that Daniel repeats the phrase, "I kept watching." This is very much what one of the elders encouraged John to do as he broke down and wept when the situation appeared to be hopeless. For you see, when we look around at just how wicked this world has become, when we get discouraged and feel like all hope is lost, we must keep watching! Jesus will one day take possession of all that is His, when the proper time has come for Him to exercise His rightful authority. So we must never give up hope. Just keep watching! The elder assured John that there was indeed One Who is worthy to open the earth's title deed.

...“Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” **Rev 5:5**

So in essence, what this raptured church member was saying to John was, "Stop crying and just keep watching." And when John did keep watching He saw with his very own eyes, "The Worthy One".

Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne.

Rev. 5:6-7

One could write an entire book about all of the descriptive names that are given to Jesus in this passage. First, He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. The conquering King of Israel Who has overcome. He is also the root of David, meaning that not only did He descend from David in His humanity, but He also preceded David in His divinity. Then, as He appeared to John in this vision, He looked as a Lamb that had been slain. The word used here for lamb is "*arnion*" meaning quite literally a "*little lamb*". This is a reference to the feast of Passover, when a young lamb was to be brought into the house and cared for as a beloved pet before it was slaughtered, and its blood placed upon the doorposts. Jesus the Beloved Lamb of God was sacrificed, so that death would "pass over" us.

I absolutely LOVE that He appears before the throne as a "slain lamb...STANDING"! The normal position for a slaughtered lamb would certainly not be an upright one. But here is the Lamb of God, standing before the throne! For you see, He was offered up as the sacrifice, but He now stands as the risen LORD. He was slain, but He rose from the dead. He is "the slain lamb, standing"!

And then, as the description of Him continues, we see that He has seven horns, meaning that He is all powerful, and seven eyes, meaning that He is all knowing. He has these attributes, because He is the embodiment of the fullness of The Holy Spirit of God (seven Spirits). Therefore, He is The Son of Man, as Daniel called Him, and The Son of God. He is God incarnate. And as such, He is able to lay claim to the title deed of this world. He was obedient to His Father, as the sacrificial lamb, as His death has paid for the sins of this world. But He has overcome death and now is standing before the throne. And now the time has come for Him to reach out His hand to claim His inheritance. Satan is soon to receive his formal eviction notice.

Lift up your head, child of God, and keep watching. Your king is coming!

The Worshipping Ones

When the “Worthy Lamb” reaches out His nail scarred hand to take the title deed to the earth, a thunderous worship service begins in heaven led by The church.

And when he had taken it, 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 God’s people. And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons 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.” **Revelation 5:8-10**

It is important for us to note that while the four living creatures bowed down before Christ, The Lamb of God, it is the elders (the church) who are leading the worship service with singing and prayer. This is not obvious in the English translations of the text, but more so in the original language. A couple of important things should be mentioned here. First, for those who would say that Jesus is somehow less than God, we should point out that the very throne bearers of God fall down to worship Him. If He were not God, then this worship would be blasphemous. But the fact remains that Christ is the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form (**Colossians 2:9**). Therefore, He is worshipped by the hosts of heaven.

Secondly, the Church of Christ is leading the worship service with music and singing and prayer. They bow down before The Lamb, while playing harps and singing His praises. Notice, if you will, the distinction that is made between the worship of the elders and the worship of the heavenly hosts. The people are singing (**vs 9**), but as the angels join in, they are merely speaking (**vs. 12**). The reason for this is that nowhere in all of Scripture is there any reference to angels singing. Only the redeemed can sing the praises of God. The angelic hosts do worship in their own way, but it is only the saved of this earth who can sing the praises of their Redeemer! And that is exactly the song that the elders are singing as Jesus takes the scroll. They sing of His great worth, because He alone has purchased (redeemed) their souls with His very own blood. And He alone has assembled this great company of worshippers from every corner of the earth.

Also notice the priestly service of the Elders. Remember that God has made The Church a kingdom and priest to serve Him (**vs. 10**), and we see here a portion of this priestly service in this passage. The elders are holding golden bowls filled with incense. *The Old Testament* priests, who served in the temple of God, were required to take incense from a wide mouth golden receptacle and offer it up to The LORD at the altar of incense located in front of the entrance to the Holy of Holies. This incense from the golden bowl represented the prayers of God’s people as the smoke from it arose filling the tabernacle with a sweet smelling savor. Now, in John’s vision, we see The Church performing this same priestly duty, offering up the prayers of the saints.

Also, I want to weigh in on what is meant by “the prayers of God’s people”. When the Book of *Revelation* speaks of “the prayers of the saints”, I believe that there is a specific prayer in view. After all, this book is written to tell of Christ’s return to earth as The Lion of Judah to usher in The Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, in this context, I believe that the “prayers of the saints” are in regard to that end. Remember what Jesus taught His disciples, when they asked Him teach them to pray:

“...Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name, YOUR KINGDOM COME, YOUR WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.” **Matthew 6:9b-10** (emphasis added)

So, I truly believe that “the prayers of the saints”, in this context, are the continual prayers of The Church for the Kingdom of God to be ushered into this world. All true believers long for the return of Christ and for His will to reign supreme upon the earth. Come to think of it, when this event actually occurs, what more could we ever ask for? All will be as it should be, when this particular prayer is answered. When

Jesus reigns upon the earth, no other prayer request will even be necessary! Don't you look forward to the day when everything will be made right in this wicked world?

As the elders pray and sing, the angelic hosts are unable to remain silent. They too offer up their spoken praises to The One Who is Worthy saying:

In a loud voice they were saying: Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"
Revelation 5:12

And then, all of creation joined in the worship! For you see, all of God's creation longs for Christ's return to this earth to lift the curse of sin and restore everything to the way it was before the fall.

For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
Romans 8:19-22

So you see, all of creation is praying for the same thing, **"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."** This is why every creature upon the earth (except for fallen mankind, who despise The LORD) are joining in the chorus of worship, when The Lamb takes the scroll. Creation longs for its day of redemption as well.

At the conclusion of this awesome worship service, there is nothing left to say, for Christ is most certainly worthy of all that had been proclaimed by the worshippers. And He shall reign in all this glory forever and ever. So the four living creatures, who bear the very throne of God simply conclude these things by saying, "Amen!" (Meaning *so be it, or truth*).

The prayers have gone up, the songs have been sung, and the declarations of praise have been offered up. It is now time for Christ to clean house and take what is rightfully His. The Kingdom of Heaven is coming to earth. Even so, come LORD Jesus.

And let the Church say Truth... So be it!