

Worthy is the Lamb

Rev 5:5-13

SS Lesson for 03/23/2014

Devotional Scripture: Phil 2:5-11

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Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The lesson reminds us that we should worship Jesus, the Lamb of God, because **Worthy is the Lamb**. The **study's aim** is to show that as the Lamb who gave Himself to pay for man's sin, Jesus is qualified and worthy to be worshipped. The **study's application** is to know that one day ALL will acknowledge Jesus' worthiness as Redeemer and Judge.

Key Verse: Rev 5:12

12 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!"

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

When the scroll was taken by the Lamb, the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb in worship. Each elder had a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which was interpreted as the prayers of the saints (cf. Ps. 141:2). While the angels presented the prayers, they were not priests or mediators. Only the harp (lyre) and the trumpet are mentioned as musical instruments in heavenly worship in the Book of Revelation. 5:9-10. In a new song the 4 creatures and 24 elders ascribed worthiness to the Lamb to take the scroll and break the seals, stating that the Lamb had been slain and had purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Those He purchased with His blood were made a kingdom and priests to serve our God (cf. 1:6), and to reign on the earth. "Purchased" is from the verb *agorazō*, "to redeem." A textual problem exists in these verses. The Greek text used by the KJV indicates that the new song is sung by those who themselves have been redeemed: "Thou... has redeemed us to God... and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." The NIV, however, reads, "You purchased men for God.... You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." If the KJV is correct, the 24 elders must represent the church or saints in general. If their song is impersonal as in the NIV and they simply are singing that Christ is the Redeemer of all men, it opens the possibility that the 24 elders could be angels, though it does not expressly affirm it. While scholars differ on this point, it would seem that since the elders are on thrones and are crowned as victors, they represent the church rather than angels. Angels have not been judged and rewarded at this point in the program of God. But angels soon join the creatures and the elders in praising the Lamb (5:11-12). The two different interpretations here should not mar the beauty of the picture and the wonder of this song of praise. The elders were joined by the hosts of angels in heaven who added their words of praise in a loud voice. The words they sang are literally "they said" (*legontes*). This is in contrast to verse 9 where the 24 elders "sang" (*adousin*). In the angels' praise they ascribed power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise to God. Every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea and all that is in them joined the heavenly throng in words of praise to God. In this final act of praise the four... creatures said Amen, and the 24 elders fell prostrate in worship. With the heavenly vision of chapters 4-5, the stage was set for the dramatic events to follow, the opening of the seven seals. It is clear from this revelation that heaven is real, not imagined. These two chapters reveal the indescribable glory and infinite majesty of the Godhead in heaven. The following chapters reveal this sovereign power of God expressed in judgment on a wicked world sunk in unprecedented depths of sin and blasphemy. Though believers today do not have the privilege of sharing John's vision or a similar one granted to Paul (2 Cor. 12:1-3), every believer can take the word pictures of Scripture here and anticipate the glory and the wonder of the heavenly scene that he will someday see with his own eyes.

Commentary from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

The fifth chapter of Revelation presents a heavenly vision of worship around the throne of God. The vision actually begins in chapter 4, when the Apostle John was invited to "come up" to heaven to see "things which must be hereafter" (vs. 1). From this point forward, the focus is on future events, as John is

shown what will take place in the time immediately preceding the second coming of Christ, which is described in 19:11-21. In his vision, John was transported to heaven to witness events there during that time of trouble on earth just prior to Christ's return. This time of trouble is often referred to as the tribulation. There in heaven, John witnessed a dramatic scene before the throne of God: the Lamb stepped forward as the only one worthy to take a book from the hand of God and open its seals (Rev. 5:1-7). The Lamb is an obvious reference to the exalted Lord Jesus Christ. The "book" or scroll, contains the prophetic judgments that are to come upon the earth. The opening of this book unleashes the judgments of the tribulation period upon the earth (chap. 6). Jesus alone is qualified to release these judgments. The Lamb's taking of this book ignites a period of worship in heaven, as various creatures fall down before Him in praise. The angels, as well as the beasts and twenty-four elders, worship the Lamb. The elders here probably represent the church, all those who have been translated into heaven prior to the tribulation. However, the worship that is described here is soon expanded to include every created being (Rev. 5:13). The focus of this heavenly worship is the "Lamb that was slain." Though the resurrected, glorified Saviour is now in heaven, it is His work on earth that is remembered. It is His substitutionary death, taking the punishment for our sins, that makes Him especially worthy of heaven's praise. The heavenly worshippers declare Him "worthy... to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Power, riches, wisdom, and strength actually are divine attributes that are here ascribed to God the Son, Jesus Christ, and He is praised for them. He is all-powerful (Rev. 1:8) and all-wise (I Cor. 1:24, 30), and He is rich in grace (Eph. 1:7; 2:7; 3:8, 16). "Honor," "glory," and "blessing" express the worship due Him from His creation. To honor, glorify, and bless Christ is to exalt Him above all others. As the "Lamb that was slain" for our sins, He is indeed worthy of all our honor and worship. While the symbolism we find in this chapter of Revelation can be difficult for us, the message of our golden text is crystal clear. Christ, the Lamb, will receive eternal worship, and He is worthy of it all. As believers, our eternal destiny is one of continual worship before the throne of God and the Lamb. Likewise, our lives today should be marked by continual worship of the Lamb who was slain.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson

The outline of the lesson came from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and from the points revealed by the study of the Scriptural text.

Verse	Phrase	Commentary
6	And in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain	The Lamb Appears
13	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!"	The Lamb Is Worshipped

Lesson Introduction and Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The book of Revelation is a God-inspired depiction of the essential conflict of every age: God and his people on the one hand against Satan and the powers of the world on the other. Also Revelation assures us that the conflict between God and the devil will not go on forever. The book of Revelation is no fantasy. There will be a decisive end in which God is fully victorious. In fact, that end is near. The book of Revelation is commonly

thought to be the most difficult and mysterious in the Bible. But if we consider a few important facts about the book, Revelation's essential message can be very clear to us. The book itself tells us that its contents were received by John while he was on the remote Mediterranean island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9). For his preaching of the gospel, imperial authorities had sentenced him to exile on that island. Persecution was the lot of many Christians in that day. Faith in Jesus made Christians the object of scorn, ridicule, and even violence. To Christians under persecution, it could seem that all the powers of the world were aligned against them. Where was God in all of this? Had he abandoned his people? Are the powers of the world really greater than God's power? Revelation answers these persistent questions. Unfolding as a series of visions, the book shows repeatedly that God delivers his people while bringing judgment on those who oppose him. Of course, persecution of the faithful was nothing new in John's day. So Revelation often borrows images from other biblical books, showing that the experience in the present is very much like the experience of the past. Our text comes early in Revelation. After introducing the book's themes (chapter 1), the book presents seven short letters to the persecuted churches of Asia Minor, offering encouragement, correction, and warning (chapters 2, 3). Then we are told of John's vision of God's throne (chapter 4). At the throne is presented "a scroll" or book, sealed with seven seals (5:1). A search is made for one who can open the scroll, and none is found (5:2, 3). John begins to weep, fearing that the scroll will not be opened (5:4). Then our text begins.

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

The Lamb Appears (Rev 5:5-7)

5 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."

6 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.

7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

With power like a Lion (5)

Power because Jesus and God are One (John 10:27-30)

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one."

Power because Jesus has God's power over all things (John 13:3)

3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;

Power because Jesus has God's power to do good and heal (Acts 10:38)

38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Power because Jesus has the power of being God in the flesh (Col 2:9)

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,

Power because Jesus is the power of God (1 Cor 1:23-25)

23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.

With the authority of God (6-7)

Jesus has authority because He defeated death (2 Tim 1:10)

10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

Jesus has authority because God gave it to Him (Matt 28:18)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Jesus has authority because He will gather His Church (1 Thess 4:16-17)

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.

Jesus has authority because He brings salvation (Heb 9:28)

28 so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Jesus has authority because He is the creator (Col 1:16)

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Jesus has authority because He is the Word (John 1:1-3)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Jesus has authority because through Him all things consist (1 Cor 8:6)

6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

Jesus has authority because He can forgive sins (Matt 9:6)

6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins. . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."

Jesus has authority because He is Lord of the Sabbath (Matt 12:8)

8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

The Lamb Is Worshipped (Rev 5:8-13)

8 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.

9 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,

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

11 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,

12 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!"

13 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!"

Worshipped by creatures and elders (8-10)

Worshipped because Jesus has been entrusted as the Judge (John 5:22-23)

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Worshipped because everyone will eventually honor Jesus (Rom 14:11)

11 It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"

Worshipped because even God exalts Jesus (Phil 2:9)

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Worshipped by all living creatures around the heavenly throne (Rev 4:8-11)

8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come." 9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Worshipped by a multitude too great to count from every nation, tribe, people and language (Rev 7:9-10)

9 After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. 10 And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Worshipped by the thousands in the chariots of God (Ps 68:17)

17 The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord [has come] from Sinai into his sanctuary.

Worshipped by the multitudes in heaven (Neh 9:6)

6 You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Worshipped by the saints through prayers (Ps 141:2)

2 May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Worshipped by angels (11-12)

Worshipped by the angels who are on the right and left of God (1 Kings 22:19)

19 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.

Worshipped by the angels who do God's bidding and obey His word (Ps 103:20)

20 Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Worshipped by the angels who fall on their faces to worship (Rev 7:11)

11 All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,

Worshipped by the angels who shout for joy (Job 38:7)

7 while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Worshipped by the angels in the assembly of God (Heb 12:22)

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,

Worshipped by the angels because the angels minister to Jesus (Heb 1:6-7)

6 And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." 7 In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire."

Worshipped by the angels because the angels are in submission to Jesus (1 Pet 3:22)

22 who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Worshipped by the angels because the angels are to serve Jesus and those who inherit salvation (Heb 1:14)

14 Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Worshipped by everything in creation (13)

Worshipped by the creation through their proclaiming God's work (Ps 19:1-4)

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. 3 There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Worshipped by the creation through their rejoicing (1 Chron 16:31)

31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"

Worshipped by the creation through their praise (Ps 89:5)

5 The heavens praise your wonders, O Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

Worshipped by the creation through their proclaiming God's righteousness (Ps 97:6)

6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.

Worshipped by the creation through their praising of God's Name (Ps 148:3-5)

3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. 4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

Worshipped by the creation through their singing and shouting of joy (Isa 49:13)

13 Shout for joy, O heavens; rejoice, O earth; burst into song, O mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thought From J. Hampton Keathley

From the series: Studies in Revelation

As to His Person

(1) He is "The Lion of the tribe of Judah." The lion is the king of beasts, and Judah is the royal tribe. Here we have an allusion to Genesis 49:9-10 where it is predicted that the future Ruler of Israel and of the earth would come out of the tribe of Judah, the royal tribe. This is, of course, a reference to the Lord Jesus who was of the line of David, a legal descendent by adoption through Joseph (Matt. 1), but also a physical descendent of David through Mary (Luke 3:23f).

(2) He is "the Root of David." This is a reference to Isaiah 11:1 where it is prophesied that from Jesse, David's father, the future Ruler of the earth, the Messiah, would rise up like a shoot or stem from the root of a cut down tree. The Davidic line would be cut down so that no man would sit on the throne of David (cf. Jer. 22:24-30), but from David's line or roots would come the Messiah, David's own progeny.

As to His Work

(1) He "has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." "Overcome" is the Greek verb *nikaw* which means "to win a victory, come off victorious, to conquer, be victorious over one's enemies." The tense is aorist. It is what grammarians call a culminative aorist which views an event or series of events from the standpoint of an accomplished act. It is used of verbs which signify an effort, or process, and the aorist denotes the attainment of the effort as an accomplished fact. The Lord Jesus faced many battles like that of His temptation, of His ministry, and of course of the cross. In all of these He came forth victorious. The aorist emphasizes the complete success of Christ's work in His ministry on earth, particularly the cross. This should remind us of His victorious shout just before He bowed His head and voluntarily died for the sin of the world. He cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30). "So as to open" is an aorist infinitive which points us to the intended results of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus in the plan of God. The results of Christ's redemptive victory is the capacity and authority to break the seals and to pour out the judgments. "To open the book" refers to Christ's authority and right to reveal the prophecies of this book, first to John and then to the church. "To open the seals" refers to His authority to break the seals and unleash their judgments here revealed when the time comes for the Tribulation.

Verse 6: So what else does John see?

(2) "A Lamb standing as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes ..." Each part of this symbolism describes certain aspects of Christ's person and work. "A Lamb." Since the one standing is "the Lamb of God," we might have expected to find the Greek article with the noun, but it is absent. Why? Because the absence of the article draws our attention to the quality or character of Christ as God's sacrificial Lamb. Further, the term used here is the Greek *arnion*. The regular word for lamb is *arnon*. *Arnion* is the diminutive form and means "little Lamb," but it came to be used as a term of endearment. The sacrificial lambs were not just lambs taken

out of the flock, but those which had often been brought into the home, cared for and loved. It expresses God's love for His Son and what it cost Him to give Him for us. The term lion is used of Christ only once in Revelation, though this is the book which reveals Christ's lion-like majestic authority and character. Yet the term "Lamb" (arnion) occurs in Revelation 28 times. The point is simply that His kingly crown, rule, and power lies in His Person and redemptive work as the Lamb of God who died in our place. The biggest battle was won on the cross. He could not take His place as Ruler until He had become the Kinsman Redeemer by the sacrifice of Himself as God's arnion. The figure of the Lamb perfectly expresses the submission and controlled gentleness (meekness) of Christ as silent before His shearers and as He was led to the cross to bear our sin. This is clearly a prominent emphasis in this chapter and declared to be one of the reasons for His worthiness to open the book and its seals (cf. 5:9-10). "Looking as if it had been slain" (NIV), or "standing as if slain" (NASB), or better, a lamb that appeared to have been slaughtered. "Standing" is a perfect tense of the verb, *ἵστημι*, "to stand." He had been slain, but now He is seen, not dead, but very much alive, indeed standing, firmly positioned, immovable and ready to judge. The perfect tense stresses this firm position. "As if slain" or literally, "as slaughtered." This verb, *σφάζω*, means "to slay, slaughter" and was used especially of victims for sacrifice. The obvious reference is to the Lord Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Again the Greek text employs the perfect tense which stresses completed action with results going on in the present. The continuing results were not continued death, but the efficacious effects of Christ's substitutionary work for sin and His defeat of Satan's power (Col. 1:12-13; 2:14-15; Heb. 2:14). The position of standing points to Him as the resurrected and victorious Savior. The marks are nevertheless there, the marks of death on His resurrected body, undoubtedly everlasting symbols of His sacrifice for us (cf. John 20:24-29). "He had seven horns." The horn is the symbol of power and of government, and seven (the number of perfection) shows us that Christ's power and government are perfect. He will be victorious over all His enemies and rule in perfect righteousness and justice as prophesied in Isaiah 11. "And seven eyes." Eyes are symbolic of Christ's omniscience, wisdom and insight. Again, seven emphasizes the totality and perfection of His knowledge and insight. In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). "Which are the seven Spirits of God." Though Christ Himself is omniscient, He also is the One who sends forth the Holy Spirit into the earth, who likewise knows all and sees all. None of His actions and decisions in His righteous judgments against the sin of mankind will be made on partial knowledge.

(3) "And He came and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne." What a beautiful scene. The only one qualified is now seen moving to take the book out of the hand of the One on the throne. With the taking up of the scroll, action is now ready to begin. Once more we must notice what Christ is doing. He is not sitting in heaven at God's right hand, making intercession. Instead, He moves forward to take the seven-sealed book containing the judgments of the Tribulation. This portrays His determination to establish the visible kingdom on earth when the time is right in the future. He is seen standing and walking between the throne and the 24 elders, the glorified, resurrected church there in heaven with Him. Walvoord writes: In the act of receiving the book from God the Father, it is made evident that judgment and power over the earth are committed to Christ the Son of God. Daniel 7:13-14 is a parallel passage. There Daniel reveals the ultimate triumph of Christ when the kingdoms of the world are given to Christ. Daniel declares, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. 14 And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In that future day complete authority over the world will be realized by Christ, an authority which He will exercise both in the judgments which precede His second coming and in His reign for one thousand years which will follow His second advent.

From URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/seven-sealed-book-and-lion-who-was-also-lamb-rev-51-14>

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. Just as Christ, as the Lamb, was in the midst of the elders, so He should always be the center of our lives (Rev. 5:6)

2. In eternity, as on earth, Christ takes charge of providing for our salvation (vs. 7)
3. A believer's prayer is never unheard and will be answered in God's time and in His way (vs. 8)
4. All things become new for a sinner whom Christ redeems (vss. 9-10)
5. As we love and serve Christ, our appreciation of His worthy sacrifice grows (vss. 11-12)
6. Knowing of Christ's ultimate adoration lets us remain focused on Him while others reject Him (vs. 13)