

## The Lion Who Was the Lamb Slain

**Text:** Revelation 5.1–14

**Theme:** All praise be to Jesus, who has taken control of the world's history.

### Introduction — What would it be like if there was no Jesus?

- I am the way, the truth, and the life: without Jesus, no way, no truth, and no life
- no hope, no meaning, no significance to world events
- think what a wasteland this would be without Jesus

### Wilderness so filled with sin and meaninglessness, suffering & pain

- might makes right would become the slogan du jour
- justice would be whatever you might make of it
- vengeance would be lived out before our very eyes
- governments would no longer serve their constituents; instead, power-hungry money-grabbers
- riots, murders, mass shootings would fill news headlines with no end in sight
- people would have no restraints: not just shoplifting singular items under coat
- run in, destroy stores, and haul off shopping carts full of stolen goods
- life, as we know it, would be a horrifying display of utter hopelessness

### We need Jesus

- Jesus lived the perfect life of obedience to God we will never be capable of
- Jesus laid down His life for ours...as awful as they might be, He did this willingly
- in doing so, He offers forgiveness, life without guilt before God, & life forever in His presence

### We need Jesus

- it is not only our own personal salvation we're talking about here
- it is hope for the world
- because Jesus is real, came, obeyed, died, was buried, and raised again, He is Lord of all things
- He took control of history, grabbed destiny by the throat and made it His
- we need Jesus because He alone brings meaning to life, to suffering, to pain
- He is the One who will judge all things and all people
- He will stand over the wicked one day and pronounce sentence upon them
- He will have those who trusted Him before Him...and rejoice over them forever

### We need Jesus

- on this Palm Sunday, we need Jesus
- not just as an historical event entering Jerusalem 2,000 years ago to suffer and die
- we need Him now, as the King to whom we shout "Hosanna! Hallelujah!"
- "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!"

### We need Jesus

- in text before us, we see Jesus...not riding upon colt of a donkey, but high & lifted up
- we see Him in charge of history: past, present, and what is yet to come
- Jesus has taken upon Him, all authority, power, might
- and we need the Jesus of Revelation 5

### We saw Jesus revealed, unveiled to us in Chapter 1

- what a glorious sight it is, to see Jesus here in this apocalypse, this revelation
- then, the Lord over His church speaks to seven churches who needed His words

- after this, He tells John, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this”
- oh, what a worship service! The One who sits upon the throne so glorious we can’t imagine it
- now usher into ch. 5 and once again we see Jesus...the very Jesus we need

*And here’s what we see...*

### **I. THE SCROLL SEALED & UNOPENED, v. 1**

- John stills sees the One seated upon the throne of all creation
- in His hands there is a scroll: a piece of parchment sealed and unopened
- seven seals represent a strong sense of fulfillment, completion in what has been written within
- and what is written within?
- I suppose, with the aid of hindsight, we could say it is “what must take place after this”
- from chapters 4 & 5 onward, it is written upon this scroll: history up to the consummation
- now remember, in v. 1, this great scroll, containing such important information is still sealed
- but also recall who holds it in His hands

*What we see and hear next is troubling, for now begins...*

### **II. THE SEARCH FOR ONE WHO IS WORTHY**

- **vv. 2–3**
- there is this “mighty angel”, an imposing figure, to be sure and no doubt
- apparently not just anyone can open this scroll; it must be someone worthy
- someone who has authority to do so, someone with power & sovereignty to rule over events
- “Who is worthy?” The angel asks to all of heaven’s court
- and the resounding, devastating answer is: “no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth”
- not the archangels, not the four living creatures, not the twenty-four elders: no one

#### **1. Why do they need to be worthy?**

- why couldn’t God Himself just open the seals on this scroll
- after all, we just heard the song sung in ch. 4 that He is worthy
- worthy to receive glory and honor and power for He created all things

##### **1) what the scroll contains**

- will reveal God’s plan for history & all humanity
- there is abundant, undeserved grace for repentant sinners
- there is unbearable, righteously inflicted justly deserved judgment on unrepentant sinners

##### **2) what the opening represents**

- if God opens this all on His own, His plan of redemption thru Jesus means nothing
- there would be no need of a mediator or protector
- of the scroll that pours out wrath would leave none untouched
- there needs to be Jesus and we, most certainly, need Jesus!

#### **2. Why does John weep so?**

- we see it is John who begins weeping, but I wonder
- I wonder if there really & truly no one worthy, would there finally be weeping in heaven?
- is John simply weeping because he is desperate to know future history & can’t now?
- I believe it is because John wants to know, not just events, but the Who over those events
- if this scroll doesn’t get opened...

- 5.9, Jesus would not be worshiped as worthy to open the scroll.
- 5.9, Jesus would not be worshiped as the world's Redeemer.
- 6.10, the martyrs of the faith would not be avenged.
- 8.4, 5, the prayers of the saints ("Your will be done; your kingdom come") would not be answered.
- 9.15, God's appointed plan would not come to pass.
- 11.15, the kingdom of the world would not become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.
- 16–18, the wicked would not be judged.
- 19, 20, Jesus would not come back.
- 21, 22, God would not reign in glory in the new heavens and the new earth.
- in other words, if this scroll isn't opened, Scripture's promises don't come true: no hope!

### 3. Do you ever get this way?

- you wonder what's to come down the road: tomorrow, next week, next year?
- and because you don't know, you feel, given circumstances, like there's no hope?
- or maybe you're discouraged about overall state of Christianity or the church today?
- or maybe news events in our nation or around the world just leave you overwhelmed?
- what do we need? More than to know what is upon a scroll, we need to know who is worthy?

*But praise for what we're given to see next:*

### III. THE SLAIN LAMB WHO ALONE IS WORTHY

- try to put yourself in John's position for a moment
- you've been caught up into heaven spiritually, see a grand vision of heaven
- see the One on the throne holding the scroll of all human history to come
- and then told no one is worthy to open it: despair? Hopelessness?
- and then, one of those 24 elders says *"Weep no more...behold..."*
- when he wipes his eyes and looks up, there is Jesus
- Lion of Judah, root of David, the conquering One...and He IS worthy!
- we need Jesus: He gives hope, He wipes away tears, He is mighty to save, He lives!
- John would have been among the throne on the first Palm Sunday
- he would have seen Jesus enter, humbly, preparing to suffer and die
- but now, he is given to see the victorious, conquering, and soon coming King of kings

#### 1. The Lion

- Judah was one of Jacob's 12 sons, eventually brought into Egypt by brother, Joseph
- before he dies, Jacob blesses his sons, Judah included
- Genesis 49.9 describes him for us: *Judah is a lion's cub...he crouched as a lion*
- Jesus comes from Judah's lineage and is this very lion
- Isaiah 11.1 declares: *"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse"*
- as a descendant of David, Jesus fulfills this as well
- in the midst of seeming hopelessness, Jesus comes, entering in as the conquering One
- because He has conquered all His enemies, He alone is worthy to open this scroll
- He is the "Yes," the "Amen" and fulfiller of all God's promises

#### 2. The power to encourage and strengthen

- notice that it is one of the 24 elders speaking to John at this moment
- if this is, as I've put it, one of those representing all the church of God's people...
- then here is one who has needed Jesus as much as John does right now

- he doesn't tell him "Keep a stiff upper lip, son; suck it up and get on your feet"
- he doesn't try to convince him that "things aren't as bad as you think"
- nor does he say "Go take a couple aspirin and you'll feel better soon"
- no, he declares: "Behold! Look up! See the One we all need! Look to Jesus"
- is Jesus the first thought on your mind when you receive bad news?
- is He the One you look to when discouraged, downhearted?
- there is so much set to strip away our joy in this world today
- but remember this, call this to mind, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday & today & forever!"
- Jesus never fails, He always conquers, He always fulfills, and He is always with us who believe

• **Psalm 24.7-10**

- 7 *Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.*
- 8 *Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord, mighty in battle!*
- 9 *Lift up your heads, O gates!  
And lift them up, O ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.*
- 10 *Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
he is the King of glory!*

**3. The Lamb, v. 6**

- but now, let's make sure we see what comes forth at this proclamation of the One coming
- John sees a gloriously divine paradox: you know, two things that shouldn't be together but are
- this Lion, this conquering One...is a Lamb, slain
- a Lion: royal, dignified, ruling, powerful
- but at the same time a Lamb, quiet, submissive, humble, slain
- slain...but standing: odd because in the OT a lamb was for one thing: slaughter as sacrifice
- and once that lamb's blood was poured out, it was dead, gone, ceased to be
- but not this Lamb, for He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- slain, but raised to new life
- and this is how Jesus conquered: He conquered by getting killed
- the almighty King overcame all His enemies when His enemies thought they'd overcome Him
- Satan surely thought he'd won a great victory that very first Good Friday
- and yes, it was Friday...but Sunday was comin'!
- God, through His Son, redefined what victory means
- when you think victory, you're thinking champions, conquerors, strongest, mightiest & more
- but you and I need to think Jesus: crucified, dead, buried, raised on the third day
- that's victory for the believer: Jesus dying, and you & I dying to self every single day
- this is what comes from trusting Jesus: dying to self
- but this is what brings us victory: being raised to new life
- so...what keeps you from trusting Jesus
- can't you see your need?

**4. What about the scroll?**

- here's what will lift your soul when down
- He went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne

- He took it; John had been told no one in heaven, on earth, under the earth was worthy
- unworthy to take it, but here comes Jesus and He takes it!
- to the one “Holy, Holy, Holy” has just been sung—He takes the scroll from the hand
- Jesus: crucified, dead, buried, raised, now taking the reins of history in His hands
- this is because He’s one with God the Father & God the Holy Spirit
- He is sovereign Lord over all things, all creatures, all human beings, over you & me
- have you come to see this? Come to recognize your need of this Lion-like slain Lamb?

*Ab, but we’re not done until we hear...*

#### IV. THE SINGING OF ALL CREATION

- **vv. 8–9a**
- this is our response when we realize how much we need Jesus & then know that He is there
- we worship Jesus
- there is the whole entourage of heaven
- four living creatures, 24 elders, all falling down before Jesus the Christ
- in v. 11 we’re told there are more joining them: many angels
- myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands
- a myriad is 10,000...so here are 10,000 of many 10,000s
- then add to that, even more of the host of heaven: 1,000s of 1,000s
- I remember being in Dallas Stadium in 1995 for a Promise Keepers event
- 65,000 men, singing the praise and glory of Jesus Christ, trying to out do the others
- it shook you, it moved you, it lifted you up, you were ready to conquer the world around you
- and they’re all singing a new song as Jesus walks up to Father and takes this scroll
- imagine your part of one of the seven churches: seven probably felt outnumbered
- truly a minority, weak, insignificant, right? Mighty power of Rome against you
- but they’re not alone, not weak, not insignificant: Jesus is their King, their Lion, their Lamb
- Jesus, being very God of very God, light from light, God from God, of the same essence of the Father
- and all creation wants to do at this moment is worship

##### 1. Sweet, powerful worship

- oh, there is enough here to spend days and days just talking about it
- and then, when you and I are done talking about, we must sing about...we must
- we can’t help ourselves but worship and praise and sing and shout: Jesus Victor!
- hear the new song they sing
- “Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals,  
for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God”
- Jesus is worthy because of what He has accomplished
- He ransomed us for God
- now know this and know it full well: Jesus paid no ransom to Satan—God owes Satan nothing
- Jesus paid ransom in sense that people were in bondage to sin & deserved to be punished
- like the Passover Lamb at exodus from Egypt, so Jesus pays the price to free God’s people

##### 2. The worshipers

- these that Jesus pays the penalty for: *“from every tribe, and language and people and nation”*
- four titles given representing the whole world—Jesus ransoms people from everywhere

- and then hear the final stanza: *“and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth”*
- when God put Adam & Eve in the garden, He told them to rule over the earth, subdue it
- God intended all the earth to become garden-like
- the result of this would be God Almighty, the Lord covering dry lands as waters cover seas
- but Adam & Eve failed and summarily thrown out of Garden
- God’s glory was not covering all the earth...stain of sin was & even all creation groans
- same task given Israel: be a kingdom of priests, conquer land I’m giving you; My glory there
- but Israel also failed, and like forefather and mother, thrown out of the land
- but Jesus succeeds, fulfilled God’s righteous requirements, makes people kingdom of priests
- the whole earth will be filled with glory of God indeed
- and all voices join together to sing...**v. 12**
- take note there are seven honorific given here: the perfect number once again
- but worship service isn’t done yet, is it?
- **v. 13:** all creation joins in praising the risen, glorified, reigning Jesus
- all creation exists for God’s glory and they let Him know it now
- after all this, the four living creatures say, “Amen—So Be It!”
- and elders fall down and worship

### **Conclusion – Have you seen your need of Jesus?**

- have you given thought that Jesus is in control of your life right now?
- even if it doesn’t *feel* like it, He is
- He rules and reigns over history for He is God and He is the Lamb slain
- what we see here in this passage is that the world needs Jesus
- He is trustworthy, He is good, He reigns