

MESSAGE NOTES
Revelation Unveiled - Part 14
“He Is Worthy To Worship?”
Revelation 5

Introduction: Billy Graham’s daughter, Ann Graham Lotz talks about what it would be like to be able to ask one question of people in the Bible and the question is, **“Was it worth it?”** What would it be like to be able to ask Abraham, Moses, Jeremiah, Mary, or the Apostle John if it was worth it to go through all they went through in order to follow God and live for him. Then she encourages us to go a little deeper and ask ourselves that same question.

Have you ever asked that of yourself? Is it worth it to really love and obey God, and live as a Follower of Jesus Christ? Is it worth it to face the ridicule of people who think you and I believe in a fairytale and are putting our hope and trust in one who doesn’t really exist, or if they do believe He existed, he certainly wasn’t God in human form? Is it worth it to share the Gospel with a friend when you know you might be rejected? Is it worth it to face the pressure of people in our world who call you evil and hateful because you don’t agree with certain lifestyle choices people make that are contrary to God’s word? – And so, they reject you even though you love them and embrace them, but they reject you because you believe what God says in His word and can’t affirm their choices. Is it worth it to make the financial sacrifice of giving to God a tithe – 10% of our income – when you could keep the money to buy the things you need or want? Is it worth it to go on serving when you feel tired, or unappreciated, or misunderstood, or when God puts you in difficult situations that are a real struggle and you wonder; God, can’t you use somebody else to accomplish this? Why do I have to be the one you call to serve in this way? Is it worth the sacrifice of time, effort, and energy to come here after a long week when you would love to just be at home relaxing and watching on live stream or doing something else? Is it worth it when you invest your time and energy in a ministry in the church and a mission in the world? Is it worth it to always try to tell the truth when you know a lie can get you out of trouble? Is it worth it to do the hard work and persevere in a relationship with someone when it seems like it would be a lot easier to just walk away? Did you ever ask any of those kinds of questions when it comes to your relationship with God? – Is it worth it?

I believe that one day you and I will stand before the One that we have served with our whole life and on that day, he will look you and he will look me in the eye, and then we will know it was worth it. On that day every question you and I have, every doubt or reservation, will be blown clean away, and we will know that it was worth it for one reason – not because it was easy, or fun, or led to great accomplishments that were real visible; but we will know that it was worth it all because at the center of human history stands a Lamb who was slain. **And He is worthy of every act of obedience ever offered to him, every temptation ever resisted, every song of worship ever sung, every tear of repentance ever shed, every ounce of labor ever expended, and every drop of blood that every martyr has shed.**

The key take away of the 5th chapter of Revelation is that Jesus is ALWAYS worth it, no matter the earthly price tag.

The Vision of the Lamb Who Is Worthy

Revelation 5:1-5...

A scroll was a sheet of papyrus or animal skin that was rolled up from both ends toward the middle and used to write a legal document such as pronouncements made by the emperor which often contained the greatness and the achievements of the emperor. Scrolls were also used for legal documents such as a deed or somebody’s will. Scrolls were written on one side only due to the way the fibers run. Yet, this scroll is written on both sides indicating it was a complete message, and it was sealed with 7 seals. 7 is the number of completion, which symbolizes that what is in the scroll is complete and cannot be changed.

The scroll represents God’s will for the earth – God’s plan for mankind, for this world, and for the future. It contains God’s judgement upon all Anti-God / Anti-Christian empires controlled by Satan and Evil. They will face their demise and ultimate end. At the same time, the scroll represents God’s ultimate Shalom for his people who remain loyal and persevere in the face of evil, suffering, opposition and persecution. This scroll is God’s plan to set the world right for God’s people. It tells us that God will redeem the world from Satan and his evil angels, and from people who have collaborated with him in trying to control the world and lead it to following Satan’s way of living, not God’s way of living.

Revelation draws from both the CONTEXT of the culture and events people were living through in John’s Day, as well as the OLD TESTAMENT TEXT & APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE where people were facing evil and persecution from the Empires in their day, similar to what the people in John’s day were facing from the Roman Empire. Here in Revelation 5, a description from Ezekiel 2 is referenced. Ezekiel describes a scroll and the judgment on Babylon who opposed God and oppressed God’s people. Revelation, like Ezekiel, is saying God will ultimately win the final battle with Satan and evil because God has the deed or title to the earth as he holds the scroll, and so He has authority over earthly empires.

John asks the question, who is worthy to open the scroll? In other words, Who is worthy to rule the earth? Who is capable of setting things right? Who is able to answer all the “Whys?” The answer comes back: “Nobody.” So he weeps for the world, humanity, and himself.

This idea of one who is worthy of opening the scroll is something people understood. In the excavation of the synagogue in Sardis, they found a beautiful ornate Moses Seat at the front of the synagogue, and the Torah closet next to it. They also found a plaque that was above the Moses seat, which said, “*Only he who is worthy, take, open, read.*” When they brought the Torah scrolls out for the reading of God’s word, every scroll would have had a seal that had to be opened and the plaque is essentially saying, “Make sure you’re worthy before you come read the word of God to the people of God in the synagogue.” John’s readers of Revelation were very familiar with the context of what was part of their culture – scrolls from Caesar were to only be opened by those who had legal authority to do so, and the scrolls from God should only be opened and read by a person who walks in faithful righteousness.

John weeps that no one is worthy to open the scroll. He weeps for the failure of the whole human race. He weeps for the beauty and peace that could be in this world instead of the suffering, death, hate and evil that goes on. He weeps for his own failure because he was not worthy even to be able to control his own sinfulness. But then one of the 24 elders who we saw last week represent ALL the People of God – Old and New Testament; the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles – says, Do not weep for there is one who is worthy. In all the universe there is one who is able in God’s eyes to hold authority and rule the earth and overcome the evil, suffering, sickness, death that is the result of our sin. It is Jesus who the Old Testament describes as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, who has triumphed. John then continues to draw on references to Old Testament Apocalyptic text as he describes the rest of the Throne Room vision. **See Revelation 5:6-14....** NOTE: *He had seven horns* – The horn represents power and seven represents completeness meaning that the lamb has complete and absolute power. *Seven eyes* – He has complete understanding and knowledge. *The seven spirits of God* – The Holy Spirit in all his fullness and attributes (Isaiah 11:2).

Jesus is worthy of our worship because: He died to take the judgment for our sin (our punishment) on himself and give us his life in return.

In verses 6 and 9, the use of the word “slaughter or slain” is very significant as it is a term from the Old Testament that was used to describe what happened to sacrificial animals because they were born and bred to be slaughtered. That was their purpose. And that is the reason or purpose for which Jesus came to earth as he came to take on himself the judgment for our sin because he loved us so much.

John is taking the people back to Exodus, which is fitting for a group of people crying out for deliverance from Roman persecution when Exodus is about deliverance from the Egyptian Empire and their persecution of God’s people who had been enslaved. In the throne room description from chapter 4, there was the rumbling, peals of thunder, and lightning reference to Exodus 28 at Sinai, and here in chapter 5, we have the Exodus reference to the Passover Lamb whose blood over the doorposts of the Jewish people’s homes had caused the Angel of Death in the last of the 10 plagues to pass over the people’s homes and not strike dead their first born male. Also, John’s reference in verse 5 to the elder who said that the Lamb of God is worthy to open the scroll is another reference to Exodus. Exodus 12 describes the need for the elders to examine and identify the *Pesach* lamb to make sure it was adequate and worthy.

Jesus, the son of God became our Passover Lamb. So he is worthy of our worship because: He died to take the judgment for our sin (our punishment) on himself and give us his life in return. In the Gospel stories, we begin to get an understanding of the magnitude of what Jesus went through for us. In the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before the cross, Jesus is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. His suffering even before the cross happens is so intense it may kill him. He is overwhelmed with sorrow, not because of the physical pain, death, or humiliation of being mocked by mobs at the cross, but it was the spiritual agony of bearing upon himself the sins of the world – your sins and mine – and the broken relationship between Jesus and God the Father which resulted from that, and which had never happened in all of eternity.

Jesus is worthy of our worship because: He has conquered (overcome) evil and all of its results.

But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, "Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David's throne, has conquered. ---- He has overcome! This is a very important word in the Book of Revelation (the Greek verb (nik-ah'o). We get the word “Nike” from this and it is the word for “victory”. **Revelation 5 is saying, The victory is won! And his victory has been transferred to you and to me (Read Romans 8).** Paul says to those who will give him our life, nothing will separate us from his love, and we are conquerors through Jesus who loves us. So you and I can live as a conqueror in the face of even our worse enemy, death. We can live with no fear as we live in the power of Christ the Lamb.

Is it worth it to give my life in service and devote myself to Jesus? Is He worthy of our worship? YES! So we join with those worshipping God in one of the great pictures of praise in Scripture. Our worship right now is part of the praise of Heaven. In a way that we don't fully understand, when we worship God, it is part of cosmic worship. He is worthy of our worship, and this is our chance to join the hosts of heaven and tell him. So let's do it with our whole heart!