

SCENE 2 IN HEAVEN: THE LION, THE LAMB, THE SCROLL ...

*CUT TO THE MIGHTY ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT
"NO ONE IN HEAVEN OR ON EARTH OR UNDER THE
EARTH WAS ABLE TO OPEN THE SCROLL OR TO
LOOK INTO IT" ...*

JOHN BURSTS INTO TEARS ...



I. Stop crying, John—the Lion has conquered and so he is worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals, 5:1-5.

- (Revelation 5:1–5 ESV) Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”

A. Cut to scene two in heaven: John bursts into tears.

In scene one—*chapter four*— John had been “at once” transported through an open door in heaven ... finding himself before the very throne of God ... a majestic scene of worship and praise ... flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder ...

Now we cut to scene two and his attention is drawn to the scroll which is held in the right hand of the one on the throne. When he hears that no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to answer the call of the mighty angel, John bursts into tears ... weeping loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look into it.

B. Why did John cry? No one is able or worthy.

John had just witnessed the generally unhealthy condition of the Church of Jesus Christ on earth, but he was then transported before the throne of God to be shown “what must take place after this” (4:1) ... so John surely must have been jubilant in hope as he anticipated his Creator finally taking back what was his.

- (Revelation 4:11 ESV) Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

... except now it seemed that this great plan had come to a screeching halt because no one (or so it seemed at the moment) could be found

who was able to open the document—or even look into it—that would allow this amazing plan of God to move forward.

SO AFTER ALL THIS ... WAS GOD’S PLAN TO BE THWARTED?

Patterson quoting G. B. Caird ... These are not the tears of the prophet, thwarted in his expectation of seeing into the future. His frustration goes deeper than that. Until the scroll is opened, God’s purposes remain not merely unknown but unaccomplished. John has been brought up on the messianic hope of the Old Testament, which promised that one day God would assume his kingly power and reign openly on earth, punishing the wicked and redressing the wrongs of the oppressed. ... John weeps with disappointment because the hope of God’s action appears to be indefinitely postponed for lack of an agent through whom God may act. [Patterson, P. (2012). *Revelation*. (E. R. Clendenen, Ed.) (Vol. 39, p. 164). Nashville, TN: B&H.]

G. K. Beale ... the book (the scroll) is ... A book containing God’s plan of judgment and redemption. The “book” is best understood as containing God’s plan of judgment and redemption, which has been set in motion by Christ’s death and resurrection but has yet to be completed. The question asked by the angelic spokesman concerns who in the created order has sovereign authority over this plan. That the book represents authority in executing the divine plan of judgment and redemption is clear from the parallelism of the hymns in 5:9-10 and 5:12. [Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 340). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.]

Beale ... The “book” [the scroll] in ch. 5 should be understood as a covenantal promise of an inheritance when seen in the light of the above two identifications of the “book” and of the broader theological context of the Apocalypse concerning paradise lost and regained. God promised to Adam that he would reign over the earth.

Although Adam forfeited this promise, Christ, the last Adam, was to inherit it. [Ibid. (pp. 340-341).]

Beale continues ... John is in despair particularly because it appears to him that the book’s seals cannot be broken and that God’s glorious plan will not be carried out. [Ibid. (p. 348).]

Robert Mounce comments that ... It appears that the promise of 4:1 (“Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this”) is about to be thwarted. Unless the seals are broken and the scroll of destiny unrolled, God’s plan for the universe will be frustrated. [Mounce, R. H. (1997). *The Book of Revelation* (p. 131). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.]

C. Why did God make John cry? So that we can see that no one (except the Lion/Lamb) is able or worthy.

The text tells us if we will listen. Can we hear “Him” now?

- (Revelation 3:22 ESV) He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.
- (Revelation 5:2–3 ESV) And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” 3 **And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.**

i. No one in creation is able or worthy. No created being is able or worthy. Only God ... only Jesus Son of God who is very God and who is apart from and beyond his created realm. **Only the man who is God was able and worthy.**

- (Revelation 7:10 ESV) And crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
- (Hebrews 2:14–15 NLT) **Because God’s children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood.** For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. 15 Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.
- (Philippians 2:6–8 NLT) Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; **he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being.** When he appeared in human form, 8 he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

Things to remember as we answer the question.

ii. Our Lord is having John write this letter, not just for John’s benefit, and not only for those in the first century A.D., but **for all the coming generations of his sheep.**

- (John 10:15–16 ESV) Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I

**WHY DID
GOD
MAKE
JOHN CRY?**

**ENTER STAGE LEFT ...
THE CONQUEROR
—THE LION OF THE
TRIBE OF JUDAH.**

lay down my life for the sheep. 16 **And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.** So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

iii. Our salvation and God’s plan are accomplished only through Jesus Christ. He is **the only one able** and he is **the only one worthy.**

- (Acts 4:12 ESV) And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

iv. Our efforts—anyone’s efforts except those of Christ—are absolutely and totally futile. God “puts John on the spot” and makes him confront the reality of our—God’s human creation—inability to do anything to bring about a right relationship with a holy God. John “took one for the team.” The “team” being all his brothers and sisters in Christ who would follow in faith in the generations to come until our Lord’s return.

- (Ephesians 2:8–9 ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. **And this is not your own doing;** it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

D. Now, John, weep no more or ever again because the Lion has conquered.

- (1 Corinthians 15:54–57 ESV) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” 55 “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 **But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

- (Romans 8:37 ESV) **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**

We have won in Christ—total, complete victory!

- (Colossians 2:13–15 NLT) You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. 14 **He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.** 15 In this way, he

disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. **He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.**

What we must come away with is this: Christ annihilated the enemy on the cross—“made a public spectacle of them” (Colossians 2:15).

When we come to the place where we understand, accept and believe in our total and complete inability to help in—or *work toward*—securing our place in God’s eternal plan, then we have come to the ground floor in understanding, accepting and believing salvation as revealed in the holy word of God—in **Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone to the glory of God alone.**

II. Dry your tears forever, John—the Lamb that was slain is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, 5:6-10.

- (Revelation 5:6–10 ESV) And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders **I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain**, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 **And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.** 8 And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying, “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 from every tribe and language and people and nation, 10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

- A. The Lamb that was slain is now standing.
- B. The Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.
- C. The Lamb is praised as worthy because his blood

sacrifice ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

- D. Through his sacrifice he not only purchased people for God but he made them a kingdom and priests to God.
- E. This kingdom of redeemed priests will one day rule on the earth.

III. Listen, John ... one day all creation in heaven and on earth and under the earth will affirm the worth and power and honor and might and glory and blessing of the Lamb and of the Lord God Almighty, 5:11-14.

- (Revelation 5:11–14 ESV) Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!” 13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, “To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!” 14 And the four living creatures said, “Amen!” and the elders fell down and worshiped.
- (Romans 8:19–22 ESV) For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.
- (Revelation 5:11 NLT) **Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders.**

SCRIPTURE ALONE

FAITH ALONE

GRACE ALONE

CHRIST ALONE

TO THE GLORY OF
GOD ALONE