

# Session 4

## HOW MUCH LONGER CAN WE TAKE THIS?

*Revelation 5*

### Memory Verse

*Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."*

– REVELATION 5:5, CSB

## How Much Longer Can We Take This?

**THEOLOGICAL THEME:** We live in a broken world full of problems that need to be dealt with. There is no solution apart from Jesus because He is the only One worthy. No one on earth, in heaven, or under the earth can fix what is wrong except the perfect Lamb of God.

What do you do when something is broken? Who is the best “fix it” person you know? We all need someone who can take care of problems when they arise, whether it is a leaking pipe, a broken toy, or a broken relationship. You may go to different people according to what needs fixing, but typically we want things to be made right and restored to working order as soon as possible.

Think about what happens when you ignore something broken. If it is on your car, you may find yourself stuck on the side of the road. If it is a toy, your kids may drive you crazy until they are able to play with it again. If it is a broken relationship, without attention to healing, things may grow worse quickly. We all want and need what is broken to be fixed. The broken world we live in needs fixing, and nothing we try apart from Jesus is going to make a difference as we will see in Revelation 5.

**?** Who do you turn to when something is broken (vehicle, appliance, relationship, toy, etc.)?

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**?** Why does it matter if you find a solution to the problem?

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## Session Summary

Because we live in a fallen world, God has plans to bring judgment. He also has a plan to save us from our sins if we trust in Him. God originally sent Jesus to earth to offer salvation to any who accept Him, and that choice is continually before every person. God will send Jesus again (the second coming), when He will bring judgment and the new heaven and earth will be established.


The apostle John was given a revelation of what would occur at the end of time. When John saw the judgment and how far the world had fallen from God, his heart was broken. He wept for what would happen and recorded what the Lord showed him so that we can know where to find the solution for the problems we face.

Nothing or no one on earth, in heaven, or under the earth is worthy and capable of fixing the problem we face except Jesus. He alone is the answer. To look for viable options elsewhere is futile. Jesus is not a solution; He is the solution. He is essential to life.

### 1. Unworthy and Overcome (Revelation 5:1-4)

John described many symbolic elements in his vision. Prior to this chapter, he had been writing about the throne room of heaven. Chapter 5 starts with a picture of a scroll in the right hand of God. This is the hand of power and authority. Scrolls were used to record important words, usually with writing only on one side. That this scroll is described with writing on both the front and back indicates that it was unusual, very detailed, and held much information.

Seals were used to finalize and legitimize a document. In a court the witnesses tied strings and sealed them with wax to protect the information from being corrupted or changed. All seven seals must be opened for the scroll to be read. This scroll was from God, and only Jesus can open it. The key was not the writing on the scroll but the seven seals and the One worth of opening them.

 What does it tell you about Jesus that He is the only one capable of opening this scroll of God?

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What was written on the scroll is important to the destiny of the world. John described an angel who called out for someone to open the seals and read the scroll. John was emphatic that no one was found worthy to do so. It is not up to man to decide the future; only God has that right and power. If an angel was looking throughout the earth and could find no one worthy, it was because there was no one worthy.

This broke John's heart. John's experience reminds us of the futility of man's efforts to solve our problems on our own. Though we may work and sweat and strain to fix the problem of sin, without One who is worthy, we have nothing. John had dedicated his life to spreading the gospel and doing kingdom work. When he was faced with the complete brokenness of the world and hopelessness apart from the lamb of God, he wept.

**?** What are some things people do to try to fix the sin problem in the world? Why is that futile apart from Jesus?

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In mourning over the state of the world, John said he began to weep loudly (v. 4 ESV). It was customary for mourners to be loud as a sign of the depth of their grief. John felt deep grief over what he recognized as a hopeless situation. When has your heart been broken over the sin and coming judgment of someone else? What would it take for you to weep and be mournful because of the consequences someone else has coming due to their poor choices? That kind of emotion implies vested interest. It reveals a person who cares about others and their suffering so much that it physically and emotionally affects them. That is a person who has a heart like God.


**?** Application: How does your heart break for the things that break God's heart? How is God calling you to act in response?

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## 2. Only One Is Worthy (Revelation 5:5-7)

One of the elders interrupted John's grieving to tell him One had been found who was able to open the scroll. Imagine how John felt as he realized hope had returned to what seemed like a hopeless situation.

 How did the elder describe the One worthy to open the scroll?

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The elder using the title "Lion from the tribe of Judah" indicated the powerful nature of this One. This One overcame death, sin, and the grave. He also endured the wrath of the Father that we deserved for sin. The title given to Jesus is a fitting description of our Savior and leaves no doubt about His worthiness.

The elder also called him the Root of David. This refers to Jesus being the prophesied Messiah who was chosen to save the world. Roots imply history, time, permanence, and depth. It is the root that gives life and sustenance as well as keeps one grounded. Trees are strengthened by their roots. Jesus was the One from the beginning of time. He was imbedded deep in the Father's plans. He has the strength to withstand anything, and as John heard in his vision, He conquered so that He could open the scroll and its seals.

 Which description for Jesus used here means the most to you and why?

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Reading how the elder described the One found worthy, you might imagine that John looked up expecting to see something resembling Aslan. Yet, he wrote that he looked up and saw “a slaughtered lamb,” not a mighty roaring, powerful lion. The way John described this lamb was both present and past. He said that the lamb was standing. He also said the lamb appeared as though he had been slain. This referenced Jesus’s work on the cross. This Lamb who had been found worthy to open the scroll was the Lamb who had already accomplished the work of forgiveness, an innocent sacrifice to pay the punishment for our sins. His willing substitution is always relevant and current. It will never grow old or be insufficient.

The seven horns and seven eyes may represent the all-powerful (omnipotence) and all-knowing (omniscience) nature of God. Horns historically and biblically represent power while eyes carry the context of knowledge and wisdom. Knowledge, wisdom, and power were all wrapped up in the love, gentleness, and humility of a little lamb. He is a worthy One that came and took the scroll as only He could. No man past or present has the power to dictate the destiny of creation. Jesus alone is worthy.



**Application: How does this description of Jesus impact you today? Where do you need Jesus’s wisdom and/or power?**


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### 3. Praise Jesus! (Revelation 5:8-14)

When Jesus, the Lamb of the tribe of Judah, stepped forward and took the scroll as only He could, there was only one possible response. All fell in worship. Those at the throne, from high-ranking angels to redeemed people, hit their knees.

The elders had bowls of incense which represented the prayers of the saints. Consider that our prayers mean so much to God that He included them in this sacred scene. God cherishes the prayers of His people. They are valuable like golden bowls and sweet to Him like the scent of incense. If our prayers matter this much to God, they should be a priority to us. Then the elders sang a new song. They worshiped in every way they could. It is good to respond to Jesus in worship, and sometimes He may give us a new song or fresh affection for Him to accurately share what is in our hearts at the time.

 When have you had a moment when you could not refrain from worshiping the Lord?

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 How did that shape your walk with Him?

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While the elders sang their praises and thanksgiving for the redemption of man, the angels joined in with praise and worship of their own. They were all focused on the Lamb. They sang with loud voices that He is worthy and deserving of all honor, praise, and glory. John tells us that there was an innumerable company of angels. Contrast this beautiful and overwhelming display around the throne with the grief that John had at first. It was a case of two extremes.

The elders started the worship, the angels joined in, and then John tells us that every creature on earth, in heaven, under the earth, and in the sea took part in declaring blessing and praises to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb. What started out as lament over the state of the world and how hopeless things seemed, turned into a worship experience of epic proportions. What changed? Jesus showed up. The only One who is worthy of such praise. The only One who can save. The only One who can make a difference and redeem people trapped in brokenness. Jesus is not simply a good option; Jesus is the only solution to the problem facing the world today. When we realize and accept this, the only response is to worship Him and share about Him with all the people we can. He is our only hope.

 Application: What do you need to do in response to what you've learned about Jesus today?

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## Conclusion

No one would argue that the world is in trouble. We have a serious problem that can't be fixed with self-help books or more effort. Christians should look around, take note of the brokenness we see, and be moved by it. John showed us what it looks like to care so much about the fate of others that we are moved to tears and grief. Though that level of care causes us to feel vulnerable, it is in keeping with the heart of God.

We need to have hearts that are broken over the sinful state of the world. Christ followers will see the pain and suffering that accompanies sin and be moved to do something about it. How soft is your heart toward people who need Jesus? Do you look at them in judgment or with compassion? Are you moved to help them see the futility of searching for answers in all the wrong places? Do you go out of your way to share Christ? How can we let them go on in the world without sharing the hope we have?

John reminded us in this scene from his vision that nothing but Jesus will make a difference. Only Jesus is found to be worthy enough to open the scrolls and reveal the judgment coming for the world. Only Jesus was the perfectly innocent sacrifice that willingly laid down His life to ransom ours. Only Jesus is the solution to our problems. He is essential to life and when we realize this truth the only response will be to worship Him and call out as the elders, angels, and all the creatures did. We will declare His power and glory forever. Amen.



 What have you put your hope in instead of Jesus? Where has that failed you? Why is Jesus the only answer to your problems? How have you learned this to be true?


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 How do you need to respond to Jesus in worship today?

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 How will you share the hope you have in Christ with someone else this week?

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# FOR NEXT WEEK

## How Can They Believe?

### Main Passages

- Romans 10:1-17

### Session Outline

1. Futile Attempts at Righteousness (Romans 10:1-8)
2. True Righteousness by Faith (Romans 10:9-13)
3. Urgency of Sharing the Gospel (Romans 10:14-17)

### Memorize

*Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered so that he is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."*

- Revelation 5:5, CSB