

Jesus is Worthy

October 4, 2026

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Revelation 5:1-14

Session Outline

1. Who is Worthy? (Revelation 5:1-4)
2. The Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5-7)
3. Worthy is the Lamb (Revelation 5:8-14)

Theological Theme

Christ, the sacrificed Lamb, is worthy.

Call to Action

How do you need to respond to Jesus this week as a sign of His value in your life?

Leader Guide

Jesus is Worthy

Introduction

King Arthur is one of history's most intriguing heroes. His legend has fascinated for hundreds of years and still finds its way into modern storylines.

Said to have lived around the fifth or sixth century, legend portrays Arthur as a brave warrior and military leader during a very violent period of British history. No historical evidence exists to confirm that King Arthur was a real person (the first accounts of him didn't pop up until the twelfth century, hundreds of years after he was meant to have lived). Portrayed as a powerful and generous Christian king, it is no wonder that his legend has lived on.

Wrapped up in the legend of Arthur is another famous story: the story of Excalibur, often known as the sword in the stone. In this legend, the famous sword was put in the stone (or an anvil, or a lake, depending on the account). It could only be drawn out by the one who was worthy—the rightful successor to king Uther Pendragon's throne. According to the story, it was King Arthur who was found worthy to pull the sword from the stone. This led to his becoming a fierce warrior and knight of the famous round table, a savior of sorts to his people.¹

King Arthur may or may not have been a real person, but today in our study of Revelation we'll read of the true Savior, who is found worthy in the most important way.



What does it mean to deem someone worthy of a certain role or task?



What have you learned in our study of Revelation so far?

Session Summary

Today, we'll continue John's vision in the heavenly throne room. John saw a sealed scroll with writing on both sides, and as he despaired because it looked like no one was worthy to open it, someone emerged.

John saw the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the sacrificed Lamb, Christ Jesus. Jesus is all-powerful and all-knowing, and His sacrifice (for people of "every tribe and language and people and nation," v. 9) makes Him worthy to open the scroll and worthy of the praise of all of creation.

1. Who is Worthy? (Revelation 5:1-4)



Describe what John saw and how he responded in these verses.

Chapter 5 of Revelation opens directly after the passage we studied last week. John saw the heavenly throne room and observed God being worshiped by every creature. In today's passage, we'll see the attention in the throne room shift.

John saw a sealed scroll in God the Father's right hand. The "right hand" (v. 1) here signifies God's authority and power.²

On the scroll, there was writing on both sides (this recalls the scroll God showed Ezekiel with writing on both sides in Ezekiel 2:9-10). This signifies it was full—complete and final. The scroll had seven seals. Ancient scrolls would have first been tied up with one or multiple threads (more threads meant the document was safer from tampering), then sealed with hot wax, with the unique seals of individual witnesses pressed into it. Someone seeking to read or tamper with the document would be unable. A person couldn't open the document without breaking the wax seals, and it was not possible to replace the seals because they were unique to the witnesses. The document would remain secure until it was the right time to open it publicly. Ancient legal documents usually had about six witnesses. This scroll had seven. Remember, seven is a number of perfection (of fullness and completeness) in the Bible.³



What might it mean about this scroll that it was sealed with the perfect number of witnesses?

What was the scroll, and what was written on it? Scholars generally interpret the scroll to represent God's perfect plan for creation.⁴ Dr. Warren Wiersbe understands the scroll to represent the "title deed" belonging to Christ because of His redemptive work on the cross. Only an appointed heir can open a title deed, and the heir in this case is Christ Jesus.⁵

Divine Authority

Chapter 5 depicts the delegation of the divine authority to the risen Lord by introducing a sequence of events reminiscent of Daniel 7. In Daniel 7 the people of God were oppressed by four terrible beasts, symbolic of evil empires and kings. Similarly, Revelation is written to people who either were, or soon would be, experiencing persecution from powers of evil.

While John saw God the Father holding the scroll, he also heard a “mighty angel” (v. 2) call out “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” (v. 2). But he called and no one in heaven or on earth was able to view the scroll or open it.



What about this problem might have led John to weep? How would you assess your own desire to know the things of God?

If the scroll held God’s perfect plan for creation, the world’s destiny, and God’s plan for redemption couldn’t be fully realized until it had been opened, it is no wonder John wept.

2. The Lion of Judah (Revelation 5:5-7)



What stands out in these verses? What is significant about the description of Jesus?

John wept because “no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it” (v. 4). But he was comforted by one of the elders in the throne room (Revelation 4:10). The elder told John not to weep because there was someone who could open the scroll and its seals.

The elder’s words (“the Lion from the tribe of Judah” and “the Root of David”) recall Old Testament imagery:

*Judah is a young lion—
my son, you return from the kill.
He crouches; he lies down like a lion
or a lioness—who dares to rouse him?
The scepter will not depart from Judah
or the staff from between his feet
until he whose right it is comes,
and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him.*
—Genesis 49:9-10

*Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.*
—Isaiah 11:1

The elder declared Christ could open the scroll and its seals because He is worthy. But when John looked, he saw not a lion, but a lamb. And not just any lamb, “one like a slaughtered lamb” (v. 6). These words also recall other biblical references:

*He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers,
he did not open his mouth.*
—Isaiah 53:7

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

—John 1:29



What do these descriptions of Jesus remind us about His identity? Why is it important we recall these truths often?

Sacrificed Passover lambs once saved God’s people from death in the plague of the firstborn in Egypt (Exodus 12), and Jesus’s sacrifice saves us in more complete way. His sacrifice delivered us from sin and death forever and His redemptive work on the cross is what made Him worthy to open the scroll.

In the book of Daniel, horns represent power (Daniel 7).⁶ Seven horns represent the Lamb’s perfect and complete power. He also has perfect omniscience (represented by seven eyes). Christ is all-powerful and all-knowing.

John saw the Lamb take the scroll. This transfer of authority allowed the Lamb to fulfill the judgments and events we will see in the contents of the scroll as we continue in Revelation.⁷

In the ancient world, when the person’s death was verified, the seals on their will would be broken, and the contents in the will made public. Similarly, Christ’s sacrificial death enabled the document to be opened.⁸



How has Christ revealed God’s perfect will to us?

3. Worthy is the Lamb (Revelation 5:8-14)



How did those surrounding the throne respond when Jesus took the throne? What does this indicate about Him?

When Christ took the scroll, the living creatures and the elders in the throne room fell down in worship before Him.

In verse 8, we read of golden bowls filled with the prayers of believers. This is a reminder our prayers are real and valuable to God (they are represented as filling golden bowls). And the word translated “saints” here isn’t exclusive. It is for all believers. Paul used the same Greek word in Romans 1:7.⁹



How can this picture shape the way we view the value of prayer?

These worshipers sang a new song proclaiming Jesus’s worthiness. He is worthy because of His sacrifice. He purchased people from “every tribe and language and people and nation” (v. 9), with His blood (1 Corinthians 6:20). Christ has made us into a kingdom of priests, and we will one day reign with Him.

Then, many more voices joined in the praise (“Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands” v. 11). In fact, all of creation joined in to praise Him in worship.

This scene reminds us of Paul's words in Philippians:

*so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—
and every tongue will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.*
—Philippians 2:10-11



What does the worthiness of Jesus indicate about how we should respond to Him every day?

Conclusion

The Book of Revelation is rich with imagery that is often hard for the uninitiated reader to interact. However, most of these difficult texts are about one basic concept—for Revelation 5, it is worship. Everyone worships something—that's how we were designed. But in our sinfulness, we often choose to worship things like spouses, success, or even sports teams. The throne room of God is the ultimate expression of worship. It is in the throne room that all bow before Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

The scene of Revelation 5 can be overwhelming, but we don't need to absorb or understand every detail. The most important thing for us to take away here is that Christ is all-powerful, all-knowing, victorious, and He is worthy.

Jesus alone is worthy of all praise and honor because He alone reveals the will of God. Had the scroll not been opened, God's Word, decrees, and judgment could not be made known. Jesus is the only One who can break the scroll, and for that, He is worthy of our worship.

He is worthy of our devotion and a worthy Shepherd in guiding our lives. Through His sacrifice, He offers the gift of salvation to people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (v. 9). Salvation is offered to anyone who believes in Him. He is worthy of all praise.



It is one thing to understand that Christ is worthy of our praise and devotion, and another to live like it. Does your life currently reflect a heart posture turned toward Jesus? How can you grow in this?



What is the value of growing together as worshipers of God in daily life?



Who can you share with about the worthiness of Christ this week?

Prayer of Response

Close your time by praying the words of the elders and angels in Revelation 5:9-10 and 12-13 to God in worship.

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

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* by Daniel Akin
- *Revelation for You* by Tim Chester
- *Be Victorious* by Warren Wiersbe



Historical Context of Revelation

Purpose

Much of the book of Revelation focuses on events at the end of the age (eschatology), more so than any other book in the Bible. But it also focuses on practical choices that believers and unbelievers must make in the course of their lives that have far-reaching consequences at the end.

Author

The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include the following. (1) The writer referred to himself as “John” (1:4, 9; 22:8). (2) He had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4, 11; 2–3). (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD). (4) The saturation of the book with Old Testament imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

Setting

The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; 2–3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9–10, 13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81–96). Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6, 13–15, 20–23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10, 14, 24; 3:9).

Special Features

The resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned “on the island called Patmos” (1:9). Christ’s twofold purpose was: (1) to “unveil” a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2–3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4–22).

Extended Commentary

Revelation 5

5:1 The right hand of God symbolizes power and authority. With writing on both sides echoes Ezk 2:9–10, where God showed the prophet a scroll with words written “on the front and back ... of lamentation, mourning, and woe.” The scroll John saw foretold woe (8:13; 9:12; 11:14), but it also disclosed God’s perfect plan (symbolized by the seven seals) of judgment and the redemption of his creation, which will culminate in the end times. Because the outer edge of the scroll was sealed, the contents could be seen only when all seven seals were removed. Thus, as the seals are opened in chap. 6, what takes place is not the content of the entire scroll, but only those judgments that precede it being fully opened.

5:2–4 The apostle John was emotionally distraught because no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was found worthy to open the scroll and read the destiny of the world.

5:5–7 Speaking of Jesus as the Lion from the tribe of Judah echoes the messianic prophecy in Gn 49:9–10. Christ was able to open the scroll and its seven seals on the basis of an accomplished fact—his death on the cross like a slaughtered lamb (Is 53:7; Jn 1:29). On the four living creatures, see note at 4:6–7. On the elders, see note at 4:3–4. In the apocalyptic book of Daniel, horns stand for power and authority (Dn 7:8, 20, 24). On the seven spirits of God, see note at 1:4. God’s sending of the seven spirits immediately after the description of the redemptive work of the Lamb (5:6) may preview “the eternal gospel” being preached climactically to the entire world in 14:6–7. The Lamb taking the scroll out of the right hand of the Father signifies a transfer of authority, allowing the Lamb to fulfill the contents of the scroll (i.e., the judgments and other events of the rest of the Apocalypse). For a parallel account, see Dn 7:13–14.

5:8 Believers’ prayers are described as filling golden bowls before the throne of God. The gold emphasizes their reality and exceeding value to God. The word saints means “holy ones.” These are not elite and exceptional Christians. Instead, the NT uses this term for all believers in Christ (Rm 1:7).

5:9–10 The new song sung in heaven about Christ is inspired by his redemptive work, the shedding of his blood on the cross. The target group for redemption (described as every tribe ... nation; cp. 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15, where the same terms are used in differing order) is the same group that is identified in the Great Commission: “all nations” (Mt 28:19). The reference to Christ’s shed blood and the phrase a kingdom and priests echo Rv 1:5–6 and may be partially fulfilled in heaven in 7:15. The promise that they will reign on the earth is fulfilled in 20:6.

5:11–14 On the living creatures, see note at 4:6–7. On the elders, see 4:3–4. This scene looks ahead to the time when “every knee will bow ... and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Php 2:10–11).

References

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