REVELATION 5

The Lion Who Is a Lamb

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”
REVELATION 5:9

Where John has brought us

1. Chapter 5 does not change rooms.

2. This chapter is also the hinge for everything that follows.



Who Is Worthy?

A sealed book, a loud question, and no one in all creation who can answer it.

REVELATION 5:1

I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik surveys the views of what the book is: Scripture, a decree against Israel, the text of Revelation, or the title deed to the earth, like the sealed deed of Jeremiah 32.

WHAT IT MEANS

The future is not loose. It is written, sealed and held in God's right hand. But a book that no one can open is a story that never ends, and John weeps greatly over it.

ἄξιος

AXIOS · "WORTHY"

Axios means deserving, of matching weight, like a coin that balances the scale. It is the key word of the chapter, appearing in verses 2, 4, 9 and 12.

The Lion Is a Lamb

John is told of a Lion, turns, and sees a Lamb standing, as if slain.

REVELATION 5:5

and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes with Clarke that the word means a little lamb. The elder announces the Lion of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:9–10) and the Root of David (Isaiah 11:1, 10), and John turns to see a Lamb.

WHAT IT MEANS

"Stop weeping; behold." The elder does not tell John his tears are wrong. He tells him where to look.

ἀρνίον

ARNION · "LAMB"

Arnion is a little lamb, and John uses it for Christ throughout Revelation. The elder announces a Lion, the royal Messiah of Judah, but what John sees is the smallest and most helpless of animals.

A New Song

Harps, golden bowls of prayer, and a song that tells the whole gospel.

REVELATION 5:10

"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik is careful about the golden bowls of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Psalm 141:2).

WHAT IT MEANS

The song tells the whole gospel in one breath: You were slain, that is the cost; purchased for God, that is the purpose; with Your blood, that is the price; from every tribe and tongue and people and nation, that is the reach.

ἀγοράζω

AGORAZŌ · "PURCHASED"

Agorazō means to buy in the marketplace, and so to buy out of bondage. The agora was the open market where goods and slaves were bought and sold.

Worthy Is the Lamb

Angels by the myriad, then every created thing, and finally "Amen."

REVELATION 5:13

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

DAVID GUZIK

Guzik notes that the same worship is given "to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." He quotes Clarke: if Jesus were not God, this would be idolatry.

WHAT IT MEANS

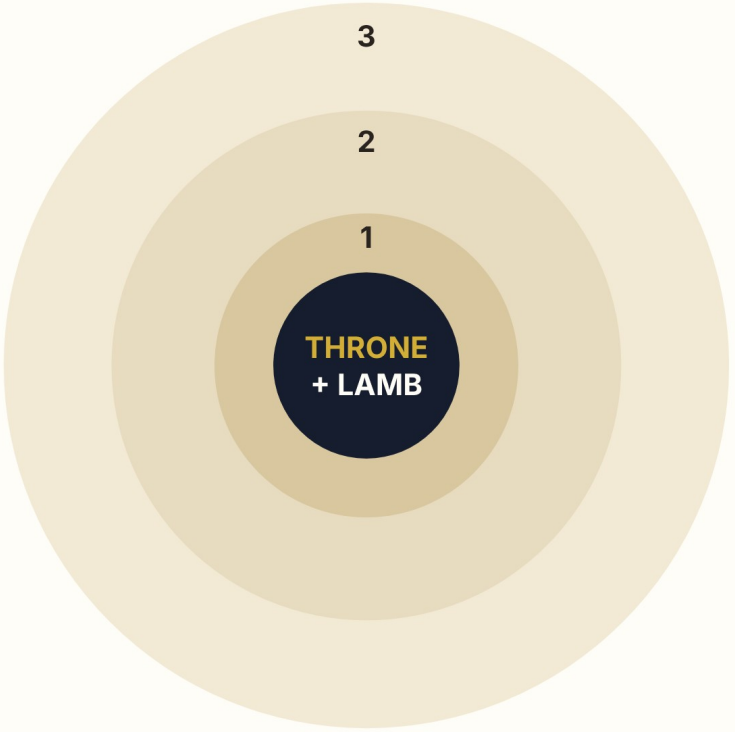
The circle keeps widening.

σφάζω
SPHAZŌ · "SLAIN"

Sphazō means to slaughter, as a sacrifice is slaughtered. It is the word in "the Lamb that was slain" (v12), and it has already sounded in verses 6 and 9.

The Widening Circle of Worship

THE WIDENING CIRCLE · REVELATION 5:8–14



1 **Creatures and elders (vv8–10)**
harps, golden bowls of prayer, and a new song

2 **Many angels (vv11–12)**
"myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands"

3 **Every created thing (v13)**
in heaven, on the earth, under the earth and on the sea

VERSE 3 ⟷ VERSE 13
none able to open ⟷ all creation praising

Worship spreads outward from the throne and the Lamb until every created thing is singing.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Same room, new focus.

Chapter 5 stays in the throne room of chapter 4; John's eyes move to the book in God's right hand.

2

The future is written.

Guzik follows Barclay: the scroll is God's final settlement of the affairs of the universe.

3

Worthy, not strong.

Axios, worthy, is the key word of the chapter, in verses 2, 4, 9 and 12.

4

Told of a Lion, shown a Lamb.

The Lion of Judah conquers as the Lamb, and has overcome by being slain.

More to carry

5

Nothing stale in the cross.

Guzik: Christ's sacrifice is as fresh before God now as the day it was offered.

6

Prayers kept in gold.

The golden bowls hold the prayers of the saints; the elders present them but do not mediate them.

7

Bought in the market.

Agorazō is marketplace language: the Lamb paid for people with His own blood.

8

Worshiped with the Father.

Guzik, citing Clarke: if Jesus were not God, the worship of verse 13 would be idolatry.

Talk it through

1. John wept because no one was worthy. When have you felt that kind of helplessness about the world or your own life?

2. Why does it matter that John is told about a Lion but sees a Lamb?

3. Walk through the four parts of the new song. Which one means the most to you right now, and why?

4. What does it tell you that your prayers are kept in golden bowls before the throne?

5. Heaven gives the Lamb the same worship it gives the Father. What does that say about who Jesus is?

CLOSING

No one else could open the book, and the Lamb did. The One who holds the future is the One who bled for you, and He bought men from every tribe and every prison and every gutter. Stop weeping, and behold: worthy is the Lamb.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

O·I·A study, slides, reflection journal and film: see the Revelation study page.