

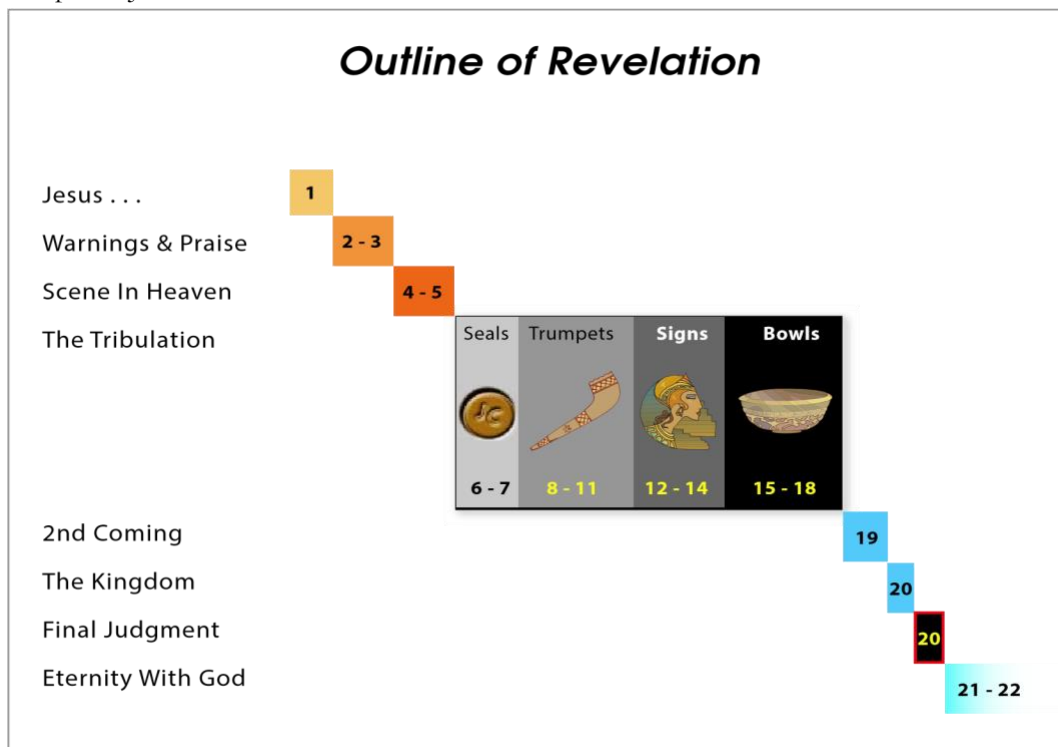
Is Anyone Worthy?

Everybody wants respect and honor and many of us get that from our co-workers, families or friends. Most everyone has an ordinary desire to be considered worthy of something significant, but there are those who want more. Simon Tournay is an example of a man who wanted too much. History says that after completing his studies at Oxford, he moved to Paris, France where he became a very prominent professor first teaching philosophy and later, Theology. It was said that he was very brilliant. Eventually the chief doctor of the Sorbonne (a university in France) became so full of himself that after teaching that Aristotle was greater than Moses and Jesus Christ, he concluded by saying that he (Tournay) was, in fact, greater than Aristotle. He had an inordinate desire to be honored. You might say that he was a sociopath. Ironically, at the end of his life, he became senile and could not remember one letter in any book, or one thing that he had ever done. God humbled Tournay was not worthy of the honor that he gave himself.

The Scroll. In our last study in Revelation 4, the Apostle John was taken to heaven in a vision and there he saw God the Father sitting on the throne with the Holy Spirit and four living creatures before Him on a sea of glass like crystal. God was also surrounded by twenty-four elders. Chapter 4 ended with the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders giving praise and honor to God. What a great vision! What an honor for the Apostle John.

Today we find ourselves in Revelation 5 as the apostle John continues to recount his vision.

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides, sealed with seven seals. (Rev. 5:1 CSB)



Books, in Bible times, did not have pages or bindings like our modern books. That is why the word *biblion* here is translated as scroll. Written “on both sides” is a reference to the 10 commandments.

Scrolls were made from the skins of sheep or goats or from the vellum of calves. The skins were washed, the hair removed and then rubbed with pumice and dressed with chalk. Finally, the skins were cut into sheets (7.5 inches by 10 inches or 19 cm by 25 cm) and up to twenty sheets were glued together (less than 35 ft or 10.7 m). The scrolls were

unrolled from left to right and were written in columns 2 to 3 inches wide (5-8 cm). **Is this the type of scroll that God the Father had in His hand?** Probably.

The use of multiple seals in a single scroll was something that would have been familiar to the apostle John and implies a legal document.

This type of scroll was common for ancient legal practices (Jer. 32:10-12). The seals were apparently attached to the document as it was being written. So, the first seal would have been attached on the inside; the next seal would have been attached later after more words were written. This process would have continued until the document was completed. This scroll has seven seals. **So, the first seal on the end of the scroll would have been broken and the last words written would have been read first.** Then the next seal would have been broken so that more of the document could have been read. This process would continue until the entire scroll was completely read. This is an important legal scroll since, indicated by having so many seals. Also, it must have been important because God the

Father is holding the scroll. **(7 seals indicate it is likely a testament/covenant.) Numbers have meaning!**

Who Is Worthy? Then the Apostle John heard a strong angel ask, “Who is worthy to open the scroll?”

² I also saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” ³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or even

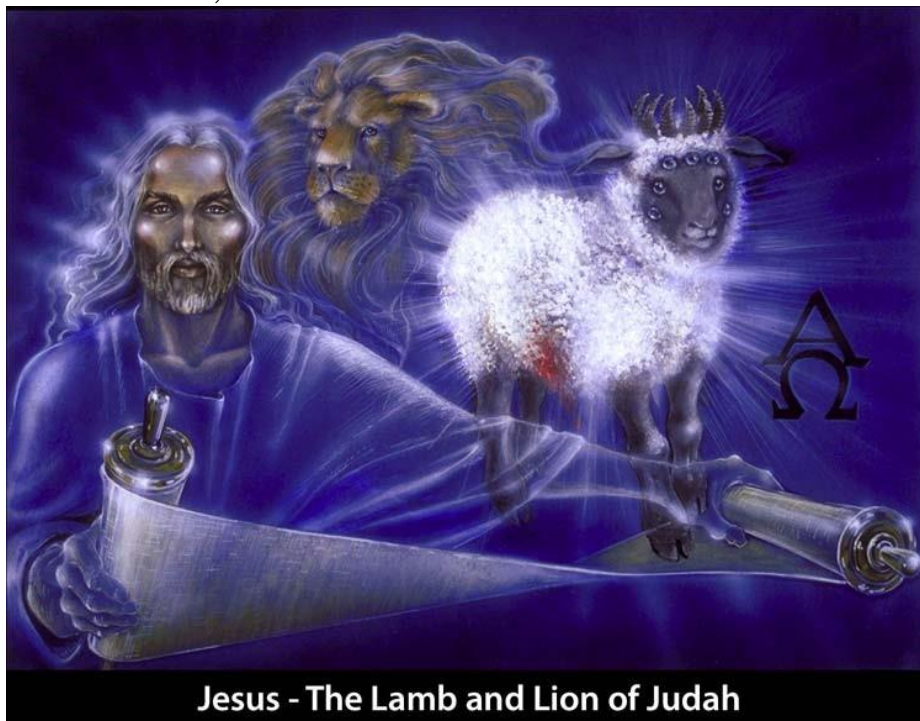
to look in it. ⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or even to look in it. (Rev. 5:2-4 CSB)

Who is worthy? The answer comes back that no created being on or under the earth or in heaven was worthy. Simon

Tournay, the doctor of Sorbonne, was not worthy. Nor was any apostle or Old Testament saint worthy.

Why the apostle cried? The New Covenant had been offered by the One sitting on the Throne, but **no one was worthy to act on behalf of both God and man** to ratify the Covenant. The seven-sealed book would remain locked.

⁵ 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.” ⁶ Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb standing in the midst of the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth. ⁷ He went and took the scroll out of



Jesus - The Lamb and Lion of Judah

the right hand of the one seated on the throne. (Rev. 5:5-7 CSB)

He is Worthy! John is comforted by one of the elders who tells John to stop weeping because the Lion from the tribe of Judah has conquered.

The elder describes Christ in the same way that Christ is described in Jacob's ancient messianic prophecy to this forth son in Genesis 49:9-10

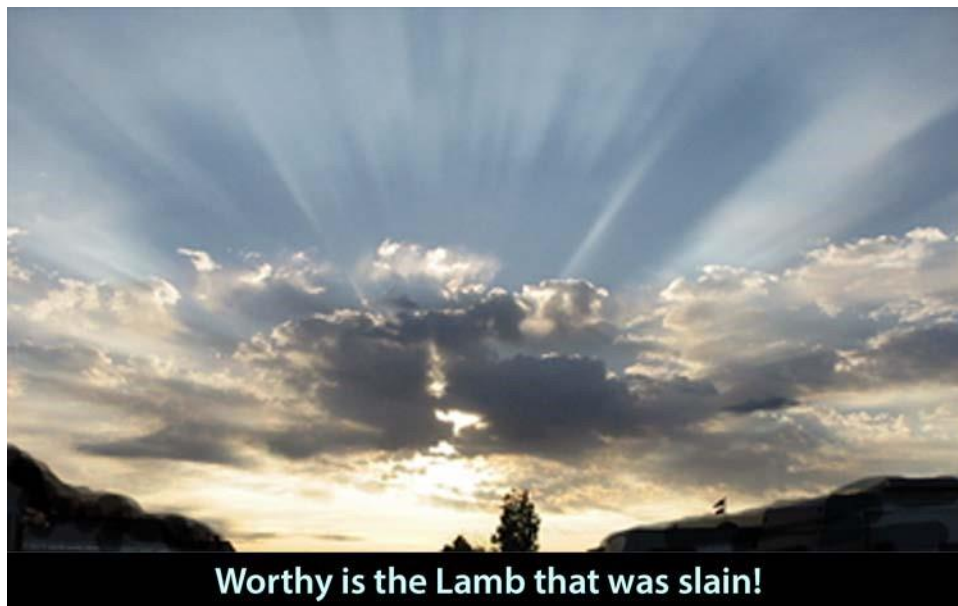
⁹ Judah is a young lion-- my son, you return from the kill. He crouches; he lies down like a lion or a lioness-- who dares to rouse him? ¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet until he whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him. (Gen.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

Here, the Old Testament says that Jesus is the **Lion** from the Tribe of Judah. He is a descendant of David (**Isa. 11:2; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:1517**) from the tribe of Judah (**Luke 3:23, 33**) and He is the Lamb of God (**Isa. 53:7; John 1:29**). Who is worthy? Jesus is worthy!

This is important because we shouldn't think of history as a series of domino effects—knock down the first and it bangs into the next and then the next etc... that is pure “cause and effect.”

History is not simply the past causing the future, in regard to prophecy, it is the future causing the past. Time is predestined and because it's beginning, and end are already established time does not develop in evolutionary fashion

from past to present to future. **Instead, it unfolds from future to present to past.** A simple illustration is that you decide to go on vacation, so you start making plans, reservations, and getting supplies together ... in a sense the future (planned vacation) has determined the past and present.



In the same way God desired to glorify Himself in Jesus Christ; therefore, He created Jesse and David and all the other ancestors, in order to bring His Son into the world. **IN THIS WAY** Jesus is presented as the center of all history, the one

who has prevailed and can open the Book and the 7 Seals.

Notice this Lamb has 7 eyes which are the 7 Spirits of God sent out into all the Earth. (To understand this, we have to go back to Genesis 1:

- The Spirit is hovering over the earth, brooding over it, forming it filling it calling forth life.
- In the creation the Spirit forms 7 acts of seeing because we are told 7 times that “God saw that it was good.”

⁸ When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and golden bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and you purchased people for God by your blood from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ You made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:8-10 CSB)

What we are seeing is the worshipping of God's assembly.

Look at how Daniel describes this same scene.

¹³ I continued watching in the night visions, and suddenly one like a son of man was coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was escorted before him. ¹⁴ He was given dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; so that those of every people, nation, and language should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will not be destroyed. (Dan. 7:13-14 CSB)

The central message of the Bible is salvation for the nations through Jesus Christ. When Jesus takes the scroll the 24 living creatures and the 24 elders fall down and worship Him... each one of these 24 each one having a harp ... and they sing a new song.

The New Song. Is mentioned 7 times in the Old Testament: Ps. 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1; Isa. 42:10 and always in reference to God's redemptive creative acts.

The New Song celebrates the making of the Covenant and foretells the coming of Christ to bring salvation to the nations, and the universal victory of the godly.

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands, plus thousands of thousands. ¹² They said with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing! ¹³ I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say, Blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever! ¹⁴ The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped. (Rev. 5:11-14 CSB)

In the next chapter, **we see what happens as Jesus breaks each seal.** We will see what happens as the seals of the scroll are broken and we are allowed to understand the contents of the scroll.

Does Jesus include us because we are worthy? I believe that George Mueller captured the answer when he said,

It ill becomes the servant to seek to be rich, and great, and honored in that world where his Lord was poor . . . and despised.

Jesus is worthy. Let us praise Him!

1. Seals (multiple) implies that this scroll is a _____
_____.
2. Numbers
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
 - -
3. Seven symbolizes God's _____ work.
4. No one was worthy to act on behalf of both _____ and _____ .
5. Prophecy unfolds from _____, to _____, to _____.