Father, what is my purpose? Your purpose is to follow Me, even in times of drought and darkness for I will give you enough light to walk safely if you follow the Light. My light is My revelation, and My revelation is lessened by lack of faith. When the storm clouds come, faith is the light that passes through the clouds and its source is My Son.

Anonymous

REVELATION CHAPTER FIVE
CHRIST IN HIS KINGLY ROLE OPENS THE SCROLL

Handout 11
Prayer Study #410
First Love Ministries of Perry, Georgia USA

The Scroll in the Hand of God

1 *And I saw lying on the open hand of Him Who was seated on the throne a scroll (book) written within and on the back, closed and sealed with seven seals;*

This verse starts with *AND* indicating that it is attached to the events of Chapter 4, which was the chapter dealing with God's Throne and heaven. Many argue, correctly I think that Chapter 5 of Revelation is a continuation of Chapter 4.

Up to the 2nd Century, writing was done on papyrus rolls and not in book form. I want to give you an idea of the dimensions of Biblical scrolls. The books of 2 and 3rd John, of Jude, and of Philemon were on one sheet of papyrus each. The papyrus sheets were ten by eight inches. Romans was 11 ½ feet long; Mark, 19 feet; John 23 ½ feet; Matthew, 30 feet; Luke and Acts, 32 feet each. Revelation was 15 feet long. The roll in Father God's hand was written on both sides, because there was so much on it. It was sealed with seven seals. Barclay tells us that this could indicate one of two things. First, the one ordinary document sealed with seven seals was a will. The Romans required that seven different men witness a will by sealing the scroll with their own seals. The will could not be opened unless all 7 men, or their legal representative, came together. Thus, this scroll in God's hand might be his will or final settlement of the affairs of the universe.

Another possibility for the use of seven seals might simply be to show the reader of Revelation the profound secrecy of the contents of the scroll. We know that the tomb of Jesus was sealed to keep it safe (Matthew 27:66), and there is the Gospel of Peter, which is in the apocrypha, and, of course, not canonized scripture, which was sealed with seven seals so that no unauthorized person could open it.

God's Book of Destiny

2 *And I saw a strong angel announcing in a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll? And [who is entitled and deserves and is morally fit] to break its seals?*
3 *And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth [in the realm of the dead, Hades]*

was able to open the scroll or to take a [single] look at its contents.
4 *And I wept audibly and bitterly because no one was found fit to open the scroll or to inspect it.*

Why was a strong angel chosen for this task of asking these questions? Perhaps the angel had to be able to have a voice so loud that it could be heard throughout the universe. The angel (mentioned again in Revelation 10:1 and 18:21) was calling for anyone worthy of the task of opening the scroll. Is this writing a book of a New Covenant with God and man, is it a record of the judgments of God that are going to take place in the last days, or is it some kind of title deed to this word, as Dr. Harry Ironside suggests? I believe the scroll is a record of what is to happen in the last days, i.e. the history of the generations still to come. Since God is omniscient, He knows not only what has happened, what is now happening, but also what is going to happen in the future, which has already been written by God. That such a book existed was commonly believed by the Jews.

John weeps bitterly over the fact that no one was found who was worthy. In fact, the Greek indicates that he wept convulsively because this was the worst tragedy that he could imagine. He had been promised in the previous chapter, verse 1, that he was going to be shown what must take place, and perhaps he felt that he would never know these deeper things of God. Also, he knew the promise to Amos in Amos 3:7: *Surely the Lord God does nothing, without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.* But the world was so far from God that no one was able to receive His message. He knew in his heart that the need of the world is for men and women in every generation to be sensitive to the message that God wants to give, and perhaps he felt that Jesus' mission, not Jesus Himself, had failed because no one was worthy. I am sure that John yearned to have some answers to the climactic time on earth at the very end. Is the earth, for example, going to continue in sin and sorrow? Is there a future for the earth and mankind on the earth? H.B. Swete says that John's tears were unnecessary but due to insufficient knowledge, for One is found worthy to open the scroll.

The Lion of Judah and the Root of David

5 *Then one of the elders of the heavenly Sanhedrin] said to me, Stop weeping! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root (Source) of David, has won (has overcome and conquered)! He can open the scroll and break its seven seals!*

This is one of the greatest triumphs of eternity, i.e. that there is One worthy to open the scroll. John's tears of sadness no doubt turned quickly to tears of joy as one of the elders tells John that Jesus is worthy. He is worthy because He is sinless and because He paid the sacrificial price for your sins and mine and then overcame death and grave in a great triumphant victory over Satan and the Kingdom of Darkness.

Jesus is the Lion of Judah. This goes back to the final blessing of Jacob over his sons before his death. In Genesis 49:9 he calls Judah *"a lion's whelp."* A whelp is a young offspring. The greatest member of the tribe of Judah is not a young offspring but fitly called *the Lion of Judah.*

The Root of David is a reference to Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 11:1 and 11:10 where Isaiah prophesies that from the root of Jesse, the father of David, will come the promised Messiah. Jesus was of the lineage of David, and yet He was the One who created David and the Messianic ancestral line. This is a great paradox, which Jesus used to baffle the Pharisees (Matthew 22:41-46). In God's covenant with David, He said that David's line would rule over the whole earth (2nd Samuel 7 and Psalm 2:8).

In Chapter One there are 24 titles for Jesus. All of these are repeated in either Chapter Two or Three. None of these titles is Jewish. From Chapter Five on all the titles of Christ will be Jewish.

The Lamb

6 *And there between the throne and the four living creatures (beings) and among the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] 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 [the sevenfold Holy Spirit] Who have been sent [on duty far and wide] into all the earth.*

This is the Passover Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. The Lamb speaks of Jesus' first coming. The Lion speaks of His 2nd Coming. He came first as a sacrifice. He will come again as a Mighty, Victorious King.

Seven horns are the traditional Jewish symbol of honor and power. (Power: Deuteronomy 22:17; 1st Kings 22:11; Zechariah 1:18; Psalm 75:4) (Honor: 1st Samuel 2:1-10, Psalm 89:17 & 24; Psalm 112:9, 10; Psalm 148:14) Seven is the Biblical number for completion. What is meant here is that Jesus is omnipotent. Seven eyes refer to the Seven Spirits of God. These interesting verses from the Old Testament writer, Zechariah (who writes of the rejection of the Messiah at His first coming and the Reign of the Messiah at His second coming) talk of the 7 eyes: "*Hear, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your companions who sit before you. For they are a wondrous sign; for behold, I am bringing forth My Servant the BRANCH. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon the stones are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription, says the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day"* (Zechariah 3:8-9), and *For who has despised the day of small things? For these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel. They are the eyes of the LORD, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth"* Zechariah 4:10). *My Servant the BRANCH* is also used by Jeremiah in Jeremiah 23:5 to refer to the Messiah. The seven eyes show that Jesus has all knowledge or is omniscient. There is no place within the universe, and beyond which is not always under the eye of God.

Music in Heaven

7 *He then went and took the scroll from the right hand of Him Who sat on the throne.*
8 *And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] prostrated themselves before the Lamb. Each was holding a harp (lute or guitar), and they had golden bowls full of incense (fragrant spices and gums for burning), which are the prayers of God's people (the saints).*
9 *And [now] they sing a new song, saying, You are worthy to take the scroll and to break the seals that are on it, for You were slain (sacrificed), and with Your blood You purchased men unto God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*
10 *And You have made them a kingdom (royal race) and priests to our God, and they shall reign [as kings] over the earth!*

In verse 7 there is a dramatic shift in what Jesus has been doing, i.e. He has been interceding for His Church, that means for you and me. Here He is taking up His authority as Righteous Judge. Chuck Missler says that when Jesus starts opening the 7 seals of this scroll, it starts the wrath of God on the earth or the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation cannot start until the seals are broken, which we will see in the next chapter. They cannot be broken until the Lamb receives the book. The Lamb cannot receive the book until the 24 elders have cast their crowns at His feet and began to worship Him. Most theologians believe that the Church is already in heaven at this time and that the Church will watch the Great Tribulation from heaven.

The twenty-four elders, as representatives of the Church, are engaged in praise, as symbolized by the harps, and in prayer, as symbolized by the golden bowls, and in worship, as proclaimed through the new song that they sing. Apparently all of heaven, at least the twenty-four elders and four living creatures, was singing this new song.

Every Christian should be in wonder and awe as this new song of verse 9 reminds us once again of the sacrifice that Jesus made for each of us, offering any one on earth the chance to be purchased back from the enemy and bought by the Lord. Every Christian in this place needs to know that he or she has been bought with a price: *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's* (1st Corinthians 6:19-20).

There are only three categories of kings and priests in the Bible. First, **Melchizedek**: Genesis 14:18-*Then Melchizedek, king of Salem brought out bread and wine: he was a priest of God Most High;* Secondly, **Jesus**: Zechariah 6:13-*Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; So, He shall be a priest on His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both;* and finally, **the Church**, as we see in verse 10.

John's close friend Peter puts this all-in perspective in 1st Peter 2:9: *But you are a*

chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Universal Adoration of the Lamb as King

11 *Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels on every side of the throne and of the living creatures and the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin], and they numbered ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands,*
12 *Saying in a loud voice, Deserving is the Lamb, Who was sacrificed, to receive all the power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and majesty (glory, splendor) and blessing!*
13 *And I heard every created thing in heaven and on earth and under the earth [in Hades, the place of departed spirits] and on the sea and all that is in it, crying out together, To Him Who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb be ascribed the blessing and the honor and the majesty (glory, splendor) and the power (might and dominion) forever and ever (through the eternities of the eternities)!*
14 *Then the four living creatures (beings) said, Amen (so be it)! And the elders [of the heavenly Sanhedrin] prostrated themselves and worshiped Him Who lives forever and ever.*

John was an eyewitness to all these things. He both heard and saw. He tells us that those surrounding the throne were so numerous that they were beyond counting.

Dr. Chuck Missler gives us the seven possessions of the Lamb:

a. **Power**: Matthew 28:18, 1st Corinthians 1:24, Colossians 1:16-17, Hebrews 1:3, Mark 5: 1-43
b. **Riches**: 2nd Corinthians 8:9, Ephesians 3:8
c. **Wisdom**, both secrets and practical knowledge: 1st Corinthians 1:24, James 1:5
d. **Strength**, which can easily disarm the powers of evil and overthrow Satan: Psalm 24:8, Matthew 12:29, Luke 11:22
e. **Honor**, for He is One before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord indeed: Philippians 2:11, Psalm 104:1, Psalm 8:5
f. **Glory**, which is His ALONE: John 1:14, 2:11, 11:4, 11:40, 17:5, 17:24
g. **Blessing**, the inevitable climax of it all, which He pours out on all of us: Psalm 103:1-2

The day is coming when every creature of God on the earth and in the sea and all of heaven will praise Him. Then you will see that all that is written in the Word of God is true. Until then, you must walk by faith, worshiping Him *who was and is and is to come*!

Worthy the Lamb

Hear the cries of the shackled from the onset of time,
For the chains of defeat, there's no key.
See the tears of the broken, the cries of the slaves.
Is there no one worthy to set us free?

Then the crying is stilled as the chorus rings out,
The shackled released from their chains.
And thousands of voices are swelling the song:
Worthy the Lamb that was slain.

Worthy, Worthy, Worthy the Lamb that was slain (x2)
Then all the archangels, the saints of all time,
Holding their crowns in their hands,
Fall down before Him joining the song:
Worthy, Worthy the Lamb

Worthy, Worthy, Worthy the Lamb that was slain (x2)
Praise Him, Praise Him, Praise the Lamb that was slain (x2)