

Nick Tarter / General

Revelation 5:1–10 NASB 2020

I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 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 be able* to open the scroll and its seven seals."

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And He came and took *the scroll* out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased *people* for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

You have made them *into* a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."

Intro

Jesus: a truer and better Ezra.

The story of the world is a story of people and people groups being sold into slavery to their sin.

Adam sold us all by bowing his knee to sin and Satan.

The kings of Israel and Judah sold their people into slavery by bowing the knee to idols rather than to the true God who had revealed Himself to them.

Ezra was charged with a great task by the Lord and by King Darius. He was to bring a remnant of the Lord back into the land, to renew the covenant, and to reestablish the worship of the Lord. Everything which was lost through disobedience, Ezra and his cohort was to restore with God's help.

Similarly, everything which has been lost in Adam is being restored in Christ. Christ is serving a role similar to Ezra's, but for the entire world.

1 Corinthians 15:22 NASB 2020

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

What is this curse that we are under and how can we be free?

Deuteronomy 5 and Numbers 14 both speak of the Lord visiting the iniquities of fathers onto sons for generations. There is a chain of unrighteousness which must be broken in us and only Christ can do this.

Likewise, the Lord visits the righteousness of fathers onto their children for generations. Should we break the chain of unrighteousness by following Christ, we set a new pattern for the generations coming up after us. Christ calls upon us to join Him in breaking the curse off of this world by following Him and living according to His ways.

Discover

I. The book represents all of God's plans and purposes for our world.

Revelation 5:1 NASB 2020

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

1. This book, which was originally wide open, was sealed due to Adam's sin and our continued participation with Adam.
2. Seven is a Biblical number of perfection so here we see not only that God's book has been sealed due to sin, but that it is perfectly sealed.

There is nothing humanity or even the angels can do to unseal God's book.

II. The seeming impossibility of God's purposes in our world being established is devastating.

Revelation 5:2–4 NASB 2020

And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

1. The strong angel could not open the sealed scroll, not could any of the elders, the four living creatures, the best of men, nor even God the Father.
 - a. Humanity has so irrevocably destroyed ourselves through rebellion, that justice demands our utter divorce from God's original intents and purposes. We are not destined for destruction, with God's original covenant with Adam fully severed.
2. John wept because he was faced with the utter hopelessness of the situation. As he stood there, he could see no hope for humanity.

III. God's purposes can and will be established because of Christ and His work.

Revelation 5:5–7 NASB 2020

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 be able* to open the scroll and its seven seals."

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And He came and took *the scroll* out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

1. Right in the midst of the hopeless sorrow, the Messiah is revealed and because He has overcome the world by His life, perfect obedience, death, burial, and resurrection, He is able to open the scroll.
 - a. Paul refers to Christ as the new and better Adam who was obedient and true where Adam failed. Adam broke God's covenant because of his disobedience, but Christ has restored it and made an even better covenant with us by His obedience.
 - b. Because of who Christ is and what He has done, God's plan and purposes for us from the beginning can be opened up.
2. Christ is the Lion of Judah who is also the root of David but is also the lamb who was slain.
 - a. Christ's seven horns are an allusion to an ancient symbol of power. The fact that Jesus has seven horns here means that He has complete and perfect power. His authority is unrivaled.
 - b. Christ's seven eyes represent the perfect Holy Spirit who is sent by Christ and by the Father into the world to accomplish every one of God's purposes which Christ's work has unsealed.
 - c. Christ is able to take the book from the Father because He is the only one who has the right to it.

IV. Christ has established a new, better, and eternal kingdom from those of us who believe in Him.

Revelation 5:8–10 NASB 2020

When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased *people* for God with Your blood from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

You have made them *into* a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth."

1. The greatest beings in Heaven are ready and swift to worship Christ.
 - a. The harps were the guitars or pianos of ancient Israel. They, along with the lyre, were the most common instruments used in worship. The fact that each of these elders and the four living creatures carried a harp shows us how ready they were to engage in worship of the One who is worthy.
 - b. The bowls of incense remind us that the angels are ministering Spirits sent to serve God's church. They literally carry the prayers of the saints with them as they stand in God's presence.
 - i. We must be clear here, that when the Bible talks about the saints, it is not referring to a special sacred order established by a papal bull. No, according to Scripture the saints are all who belong to Christ. We do not need the help of some departed Christian to bring out prayers before the Lord. We each have equal and direct access to the Father through Christ. He alone is our righteous High Priest and if we are in Him, the angels who minister in His presence carry our petitions before Him.
 - ii. Listen good Christian... do you deem yourself small before the Lord? I declare to you that in Christ your prayers are just as effective before the Father as Peter's, or Paul's, or John's, or any saint of the Lord who has ever lived. Your position in Christ has not been earned, but has been given to you by His grace through your faith in Him. So be of good courage and pray to the Lord with boldness, believing that you will have every prayer you pray according to His good will.
2. Christ is worthy to break the seals of the scroll because He has purchased us by His blood.
 - a. God always intended to build a kingdom of priests for Himself from humanity. We broke His plan, but Christ has overcome our sin and has restored God's plan in us.
 - b. We are the Kingdom of priests in Christ and it is time that we fully embrace the reality of who we are. The world would love to keep us silent, to hold us down but Christ has destined us to reign with Him. He does not want us to wait until He returns to exercise the

dominion He has given us, He wants to to practice ruling with Him now because though the kingdom is veiled from this world, it is our present reality and will be fully revealed soon enough.

Nurture

Who is God? He is the Father who rules, the Son who redeems and restores, and the Spirit who goes out on mission to carry out Christ's continuing work.

What has God done? He has overcome the sin of Adam by Christ's work and has established His kingdom in us.

Who are we? We are Christ's nation of priests whom He has purchased with His blood.

What will we do? We will act like the kingdom of priests who we are, joining Christ on His mission to redeem, restore, reign, and re-establish a culture of worship in this world.

Act

We must stop abdicating our lives to Satan in the example of Adam by participating in the world of darkness rather than walking in the light of Christ.

Because of who we are in Christ, we must commit ourselves to actively pursuing Christ daily, and we must train ourselves to walk in our new identity as kings and coheirs with Christ.

Andrew Root has written in his book *The Church in an Age of Secular Mysticism* that we live in a world which has been deceived into thinking at every level that the individual is perfect and at the center of our own imagined world. The key to flourishing is to reject outside influence and embrace self alone as the source for our own truth. We must fight this impulse and philosophy which has been ingrained into our minds from birth in this modern secular America. Life is in Christ alone. Only He can open up a flourishing and truly good life for us. Therefore, we must die to our old life in Adam if we are to live in Christ.

When we walk with Christ, we join Him in His work of opening the seals which have kept the world back from His goodness and glory

"We are born into a kingdom; to obey God is to be free." -Seneca

Christ has the power to open the book and when we walk in alignment with His ways, we are walking in His story, in His open book rather than in the closed book which Satan attempted to stifle us within.

1 Corinthians 15:22 NASB 2020

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.