**the one worthy to JUDGE**

(Revelation 5)

Last week in Revelation 4, we saw John transported to the throne room of God Almighty in heaven. In chapter 1 of Revelation, John wrote about **the past** (what he had seen). Then in Rev 2, John wrote about **the present** (the things which are—Jesus’s words to the pastors of the seven churches of John’s day circa 95 AD). But in Rev 4, what we saw were Jesus’s words to John about **the future** (the things that shall be hereafter).

John is transported into the presence of God the Father and His throne room in heaven—the heavenly temple that Moses fashioned the earthly tabernacle in the wilderness after. Rev 4 is all about the sovereignty of God the Father. Since He created everything there is and everyone who exists, He is worthy of glory and honor. But there is a problem. Mankind does not want to give honor and glory to God, and because of that, divine judgment must fall on rebellious mankind (this is the theme of Revelation).

May I read you the quote that I shared with you two weeks ago from British scholar N. T. Wright? Wright said:

The word *judgment* carries negative overtones for a good many people in our liberal and postliberal world. We need to remind ourselves that throughout the Bible God's coming judgment is a good thing, something to be celebrated, longed for, yearned over. It causes people to shout for joy and the trees of the field to clap their hands. In a world of systematic injustice, bullying, violence, arrogance, and oppression, the thought that there might come a day when the wicked are firmly put in their place and the poor and weak are given their due is the best news there can be. Faced with a world in rebellion, a world full of exploitation and wickedness, a good God must be a God of judgment.

A good God must punish evildoers. But since the gospel of John tells us that “the Father judges no one…”Revelation 5 tells us who God the Father finds worthy to do this and why.

The title for my message this morning is **The One Worthy to Judge.**

Last week, we ended our message with the last verse of Revelation 4 (where God the Father is being praised for His absolute rule and authority over mankind). And Revelation 5 picks up right where we left off. We are still in God’s throne room and John sees something that catches his attention:

**Revelation 5:1-----**And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

The sovereign Father holds the seven-sealed scroll---all 21 judgments (seal, trumpet, bowl) that will fall on rebellious mankind. He has determined them beforehand and they will come to pass according to His perfect wisdom.

However, since the Father “judges no one” a mighty angel in God’s presence asks a question (look at v. 2):

**Revelation 5:2-----**Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

In other words, “Who deserves this honor? Who has the credentials to do this?”

Well … first the bad news. Not one human being God created was found worthy to do this, and this caused John to lose it:

**Revelation 5:3-4-----**And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. **So I wept much**, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

Now the good news. One of the 24 heavenly elders we saw in Rev 4 comes over to John and says (v. 5):

**Revelation 5:5-----** “Do not weep. Behold, **the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David**, [those are messianic titles] has **prevailed** [overcome, won the victory] to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

Now …. no sooner does the elder tell John this that—BOOM— $John suddenly sees, right before his eyes, the Lord Jesus Christ, not in human form, but as a Lamb who has been slaughtered and is still standing (v. 6):

**Revelation 5:6**-----And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood **a Lamb as though it had been slain**, (slaughtered) having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

There are two reasons that Jesus is worthy to judge rebellious mankind and the first one is this:

**1. Because of His magnificent person** (character)

He is a Lion (possessing amazing power) who is a Lamb(a humble servant). His power is also seen in v. 6 where Jesus is pictured as a Lamb who has “seven horns and seven eyes…sent out into all the earth.”

“Seven” in the Bible is a number of perfection, and the seven horns picture perfect power—Jesus is omnipotent (all-powerful).

The seven eyes this Lamb has picture perfect knowledge of everything—Jesus is omniscient (all-knowing).

The seven eyes are described as “seven Spirits sent out into all the earth.” Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Lamb has perfect presence—in other words, Jesus is Omnipresent (He is everywhere at once—"in ALL the earth.”)

Jesus could have come to earth the first time with “guns blazing” against His enemies, but He didn’t. He came as “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus taught the greatest of all is a servant.

So first of all, Jesus has the credentials to judge rebellious mankind because of **His magnificent person**, but there is another reason, found in verses 5 and 6.

Jesus is not only worthy because of His magnificent person, but also:

**2. Because of His superlative payment**

Of course, this is a reference to the price He paid by going to the cross to redeem us from sin.

In v. 5, it says: Jesus **“has prevailed”** (won the victory; overcome). Just like we have to be faithful to God *until death* in order to rule with Him, Jesus, as a human, also needed to be faithful to God till the end. And He was! He **prevailed**, i.e., He won the victory, being faithful to death.

Vv. 6, 9, & 12 call Jesus the Lamb who was **“slain”** = slaughtered. On the cross, Jesus lost His life so that we might have life!

He is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

One time, a woman wrote the following question to radio preacher J. Vernon McGee: "Our preacher said that Jesus just fainted on the cross and that on Easter the disciples nursed him back to health. What do you think?" McGee replied, "Dear Sister, beat your preacher with a leather whip for thirty-nine heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for six hours Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for three days. Then see what happens."

Jesus did not just faint…He was slaughtered---for your sins and for mine.

Comedienne Woody Allen once said: “I don't want to achieve immortality through my work. I want to achieve it by not dying.”

That’s a funny joke, but unfortunately, no one is immortal. One out of one people die. And if Christ had not died for our sins and risen from the dead, we would **all** be eternally condemned!

**So, Jesus is worthy to judge, not only because He is magnificent in His own person, but also because of His superlative sacrifice for our sins!**

No wonder, starting in verse 7, we have the greatest worship service in history!

In v. 7, Jesus takes the scroll out of the Father’s right hand (symbolizing that the Father judges no one but has committed the judgment of all mankind to the Son):

**Revelation 5:7**-----Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

And as soon as He does this, a massive worship service begins (notice v. 8):

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, [the elders are guitar players!] and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying:

**The 24 Elders sing:** (v. 9)You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;

 For You were slain,

 And have **redeemed us** to God by Your blood

 Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

**The Four Living Creatures sing:** (v. 10)

And have made them kings and priests to our God; And they shall reign on the earth.

**Millions (incl. 4 + 24) sing**: (vv. 11-12)

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

“**Worthy is the Lamb who was slain**

To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

**All Creation sings:** (v. 13)
And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be **to Him who sits on the throne**,
And **to the Lamb**, forever and ever!”

**The Four Living Creatures sing:** (v. 14a)

Then the four living creatures said, “**Amen**!”

**The 24 Elders sing:** (v. 14b)

And the twenty-four elders **fell down** **and worshiped**…

Folks, people on earth despise the idea of a God who judges people, but heaven is having a worship service because the Father and Son will one day hold mankind accountable for their rebellion against heaven.

(Invitation; then worship---Holy, Holy, Holy/To Him Who Sits on the Throne)

**Study Notes**

John the Baptist and the Roman Centurion:
**“I am not worthy…”**

Heaven and all creation:
**“Worthy is the Lamb!”**

**Matthew 3:11**

11 [[1]](#footnote-1)oI indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. [[2]](#footnote-2)pHe will baptize you with the Holy Spirit [[3]](#footnote-3)1and fire.

**Matthew 8:8**

8The centurion answered and said, “Lord, [[4]](#footnote-4)iI am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only [[5]](#footnote-5)jspeak a word, and my servant will be healed.

**Revelation 5**-----

The sovereign Father holds the seven-sealed scroll---the judgments that will fall on rebellious mankind.

1 And I saw … a scroll

in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne

written inside and on the back,

sealed with seven seals.

Since the Father “judges no one,” a mighty angel asks who is worthy to judge mankind (i.e., to open the scroll and to loose its seals).

 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice,

“Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

No created being was found worthy to do this causing John to weep.

3 And no one

in heaven

or on the earth

or under the earth

was able to open the scroll,

or to look at it.

4 So I wept much,

because no one was found worthy

to open and read the scroll,

or to look at it.

An elder tells John to stop weeping because Jesus is worthy to do this.

5 But one of the elders said to me,

“Do not weep.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David,

has prevailed

to open the scroll and

to loose its seven seals.”

6 And I looked, and behold,

in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures,

and in the midst of the elders,

stood a Lamb

as though it had been slain,

having seven horns

and seven eyes,

which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The Father commits the judgment of mankind to His Son.

7 Then He came and took the scroll

 out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Jesus is worthy to judge mankind, not only because the Father, as the sovereign God, has willed this, but also on the basis of His saving work: (1) His death for mankind’s sins; (2) His redemption of those who will rule with Him

8 Now when He had taken the scroll,

the four living creatures

and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb,

each having a harp,

and golden bowls full of incense,

which are the prayers of the saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying:

Note: This “antiphonal” choir is like the song we sing based on Psalm 136:

Person 1: Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King

Others: His love endures forever

Person 1: For He is good, He is above all things

Others: His love endures forever

All: Sing praise, sing praise

Person 1: With a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm

Others: His love endures forever

Person 1: For the life that’s been reborn

Others: His love endures forever

All: Sing praise, sing praise

ELDERS sing:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,

 And to open its seals;

For You were slain,

And have redeemed **us** to God by Your blood

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

(it has to be the ELDERS because only humans could sing of being redeemed.)

THE 4 LIVING CREATURES sing:

10 And have made us [**them**] kings and priests to our God;

And we [**they**] shall reign on the earth.”

28 worshipers of the Father and Son becomes millions of worshipers becomes all creation!

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of

many angels around the throne,

the living creatures,

and the elders;

and the number of them was ten thousand

times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

12 saying with a loud voice:

MILLIONS (INC. 4 +24) SING:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

ALL CREATION SINGS:

13 And every creature which is

in heaven
and on the earth

and under the earth

and such as are in the sea,

and all that are in them,

I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power *Be* to Him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

THE 4 LIVING CREATURES sing:

14 Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!”

ELDERS sing:

And the twenty-four elders fell down **and worshiped** ~~Him who lives forever and ever~~.
(not in MT).

Words unspecifed

1. o Mark 1:4, 8; Luke 3:16; John 1:26; Acts 1:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. p [Is. 4:4; John 20:22; Acts 2:3, 4; 1 Cor. 12:13] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 1 M omits *and fire* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. i Luke 15:19, 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. j Ps. 107:20 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)