

“Revealed” Series / Revelation 5: The Lion and the Lamb **August 23, 2015**

(Adapted from John Ortberg)

(Doc) (Rev 4) Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven, and the same voice I had heard before spoke to me like a trumpet blast. The voice said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must happen after this.” And instantly I was in the Spirit, and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it. The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—like jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow. Twenty-four thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder. And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is the sevenfold Spirit of God. In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal.

(Jon) In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. The first of these living beings was like a lion; the second was like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth was like an eagle in flight. Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying,

(Responsive) “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty—the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come.”

(Todd) Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever), the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever). And they lay their crowns before the throne and say,

(Responsive) “You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.”

(Doc) John Ortberg, a great preacher, says, What if you could ask the God followers of the Bible one question: “Was it worth it?”

- What if you could ask Abraham: “Was it worth leaving your home, everything familiar, everything you loved to spend your life wandering as a stranger for one child and an unfulfilled promise?”
- What if you could ask Moses: “Was it worth leaving the treasures and pleasures of Egypt, your comfort and power, to lead a bunch of whiners through a desert for 40 years only to end up dying before you made it to the promised land?”
- **(Jon)** Or Jeremiah: “Was it worth devoting your life to a preaching ministry you hated and they hated, that never seemed to make a convert or even a dent?”
- Or Mary: “Was it worth it to conceive a child out of wedlock, to put up with a lifetime of whispers, only to hear him say that his real family are those who do his will, and then to watch helplessly as they brutally murder your boy?”
- Or John, the Baptist: “Was it worth it to be God’s messenger in a desert, eating bugs, only to end up in prison, confused by God, and then beheaded?”
- **(Todd)** Or Paul, the apostle: “Was it worth it to walk away from prestige, and power, and security, to spend your life hated, and hounded, and poor; in and out of prison, and eventually beheaded ... for Jesus?”
- Or John, the apostle: “Was it worth spending your old age – when a man wants to be surrounded by his children, and grandchildren, and old friends – instead in exile, on an island, separated from everyone and everything you love?”

(Jon) Was it worth it? Maybe we should make it personal: Is it worth it ... to you?

- Is it worth it to give your first part back to God when you could use that money to buy what you really want or really need?
- Is it worth it to keep on serving when you are tired and unappreciated, it seems? When others seem to get the recognition?
- Is it worth it to obey God, when what he wants seems unreasonable? To tell the truth when just a little lie would spare you and others so much pain?
- **(Todd)** Is it worth it to persevere in a tough marriage, when a part of you, and so many others, want you to walk away?

- Is it worth it to try to forgive the unforgivable, to try to love the unlovable, to try to put up with the intolerable ... for him?
- Is it worth it to share Jesus with a friend who may not listen, who may even push you away?
- Is it worth it to drag yourself out of bed and come here when you really need to recover from a hard week?

(Doc) Was it worth it – for them? Is it worth it – for us? ... Are you serious?! Here's what I believe; here's what we believe; here's what all us Jesus followers believe: We believe that someday every one of us will stand before the one we serve first, the one we love most, and he will look us in the eye ... with a tender acceptance ... and it will be so clear.

(Jon) On that day every question you have ever had will be answered, every doubt you have ever battled will be overwhelmed, and you will know – It was worth it; in fact, it was worth so much more. Not because it made your life easier – following him doesn't. Not because it made your life more successful, or more fun – following him doesn't usually take us there. It was worth it because you will see, before your eyes, the one it's all about – the Lion of God, the Lamb of God, who died ... for you.

And you will know: he is worthy. He is worthy of every act of obedience ever offered to him. He is worthy of every temptation resisted. He is worthy of every tear of repentance. He is worthy of every ounce of energy expended to serve him. He is worthy of every decibel used to praise him.

(Todd) He is worthy of every bit of ridicule, every act of contempt directed at us because we try to honor him. He is worthy of every drop of blood ever shed by every martyr who loved him. He is worthy. He is worthy of my life; he is worthy of your life. He is worthy of everything we try to do together here to serve him and honor him.

Do you believe that? ... You will! Do you believe that right now?

(Video: Rev 5.1-10) Then I saw a scroll in the right hand of the one who was sitting on the throne. There was writing on the inside and the outside of the scroll, and it was sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel, who shouted with a loud voice: "Who is worthy to break

the seals on this scroll and open it?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll and read it.

Then I began to weep bitterly because no one was found **worthy** to open the scroll and read it. But one of the twenty-four elders said to me, “Stop weeping! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the heir to David’s throne, has won the victory. He is **worthy** to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

Then I saw a Lamb that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent the sevenfold Spirit of God that is sent out into every part of the earth. He stepped forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the one sitting on the throne. And when he took the scroll, the four living beings and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp, and they held gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of God’s people.

And they sang a new song with these words: “You are **worthy**(you are worthy!) to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For you were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. And you have caused them to become a Kingdom of priests for our God. And they will reign on the earth.”

*** *Worship Song*

(Doc)(5.1) So the apostle John has this vision of heaven. And he sees this scroll in the right hand of God. And somehow John knows that scroll is incredibly important – writing on the inside and the outside (so odd, at that time); sealed with not just one, but with 7 seals. Perhaps it was God’s judgment on all that has been, and his plan for all that will be. Perhaps it contained God’s answers to the brokenness of this world, answers we have been waiting for ... for millennia.

There is a scroll, guys. And it means that this world is not an accident, and you are not an accident. It means that there is a reason, there is a purpose. You wonder, “Why?” We keep asking, “Why?” Well ... there is

a scroll. And it will reveal that we are part of a story, a sometimes grand, a sometimes tragic story. And it will reveal that just as the beginning of this story was no accident, neither will the end be.

(Todd)(5.2) And who can take the scroll from right hand of God? ... Are you serious?! Who would dare to break it seals? Who has that kind of authority? Who would be able to execute that judgment, to heal all that brokenness, to answer once and for all that “Why?”?

(5.3) The answer is: No one. No man on earth; no angel in heaven; no demon from hell. And to be honest, that’s been the problem all along. We anoint kings, we elect presidents, hoping they’ll finally get it right. They don’t; they can’t. We raise up heroes. Sometimes they make a dent in the brokenness, for a moment. We listen to preachers, to prophets, to professors, to pundits. We can’t even open our own little scrolls.

(Jon)(5.4) So John begins to weep. He weeps for the failures of humanity. He weeps for the beauty that could be, but is not. He weeps for the brokenness that plagues us, and perplexes us. He weeps for his own failures ... because he is not worthy either. If you have ever wept at your own brokenness, if you have ever wept at the brokenness of a husband, or a wife, or a child, or a friend, if you have ever wept at the brokenness of a world estranged from it’s creator ... then you have wept the tears of John.

(Todd)(5.5) But then one of the elders took his breath away. He said, “Shhhh. There is one: the Lion of Judah. He is worthy. He is worthy to take the scroll from the right hand of God. He is worthy to break open its seals. He is worthy to execute God’s judgment once and for all, to heal that brokenness once and for all, to answer our “why?” once and for all.

(Doc)(5.6-7) And ... this is so incredible ... John looks up to see the Lion of Judah, and instead he sees a Lamb, that had been slaughtered, but now standing tall. And this Lion / Lamb steps forward and takes the scroll from the right hand of the Father. And all those who were there, who witnessed the most consequential moment in our history ... they begin to worship, the only one who was, the only one who is ... worthy.

(5.9) John says, “They sang a new song with these words, ‘You are worthy (Only you are worthy) to take the scroll and break its seals and open it.

(Why?) Because ... because you were slaughtered (?!), and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.”

(Jon) It's odd, isn't it, that the first reason given that the Lamb is worthy is that he had been slain? Better, I think, "slaughtered." Because the word John chose is a word they would use for sacrifices, when they would slaughter a lamb in the temple as a sacrifice, when they would kill animals born and bred to be slaughtered.

But the idea here is about way more than just dying. You see, Jesus isn't worthy just because he died, for you. There are thousands of martyrs who aren't worthy. There are thousands of martyrs who have suffered greater torture, for longer periods of time, with less anguish than Jesus.

(Todd) Guys, Jesus was not calm and collected on his way to the cross. Jesus himself said, "I am overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." He was in such emotional agony that even before his arrest his sweat was like drops of blood. He is in torment, in agony at the prospect of what was coming. He begs his Father to take "the cup of suffering" away from him, if possible.

Because it wasn't just about the whipping, and the nails, and the dying. It was the prospect of the spiritual agony he would feel as he bore the sins of the world – yours and mine. Have you ever been convicted of sin, down to the core of your being? You understood with blinding clarity the evil of your sin, and the pain it caused. Maybe you betrayed someone; maybe you had an abortion, and at some point you saw what you had done through God's eyes; maybe you lied a terrible lie; or stole something precious. And in some moment of conviction, you were overwhelmed with guilt, and shame, and brokenness.

(Doc) Think about that moment and multiply it times the thousands of sins you have committed – even those you are too calloused to notice. And then multiply that times the sins of the billions of people on earth. Every act or thought of lust, or gluttony, or greed, or sloth, or anger, or envy, or pride – the whole sordid history of human sin. And imagine one man – just one man -- experiencing the weight of it all, taking upon himself the guilt and the shame that crushes each of us individually. Imagine that one

person feeling the wedge that our sins drive between us and God. Imagine that one person accepting the wrath of God against all the sin that destroys the creatures he still somehow loves.

Imagine all that burden falling on a heart that had never, ever – through all eternity – known any shadow of guilt or shame. Imagine that wrath falling on one who had never, ever – through all eternity – felt any separation from his Father. Then you begin to understand what the apostle Paul meant when he said, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming the curse for us. He who knew no sin became sin for our sakes.

(Todd) Here’s the point: Jesus drained the cup of the Father’s wrath so you wouldn’t have to taste a drop of it. If you are a Jesus follower, you will never face God’s wrath – against your sin. All you will see in his eyes will be a tenderness, an acceptance, a love. All you will experience for eternity will be his pardon, and his grace, in spite of all the sins you have committed.

(Jon) You will never experience the punishment you deserve for your sin. That punishment would kill me, and you, a thousand times over. But he took it for you. And the elders and the angels see that love and they begin to sing, “You are worthy, for you were slaughtered, in your innocence and your love.

“Words of the Worship Song as a transition ...”

Worship Song 2

Lord’s Supper

(Doc) (5.9) And because of that, John says, Because of what Jesus did on a cross, John says, “His blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.” Guys, that includes us! He is worthy of our praise and honor because he ransomed us. That’s a huge idea all over the New Testament. In fact that’s why he came. (Mk 10.45) In his own words Jesus said, “The Son of Man – the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God – did not come to be served but to serve others, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

In John’s day, people were very familiar with this idea of ransom. When someone became a slave, their freedom came at a price. In theory they

could pay that price themselves, but most slaves just couldn't pay it. Someone else could pay it for them, but that was rare. So slaves usually lived their whole life knowing that freedom was just a ransom away, but just out of reach. They would die as slaves, unredeemed.

(Todd) If you saw the movie "Schindler's List," you saw the power of the ransom. Oscar Schindler saw these Jews headed to the death camps, and he began to use his money, and his factory, and his influence to save as many as he could. There's one scene where he has a group of workers coming to his factory, as their wives and kids were on the train heading to their deaths. Do you remember what happens? How he goes to the German officers, and he pours out a bag of diamonds and says, "I want to buy those people."

As the movie ends, and his Jews are liberated, he is surrounded by the hundreds he has saved, and he is overwhelmed by the thought of those he lost, and he broke down: "I could have done more. I could have sold this car. I could have sold this ring. I could have bought another life, maybe two."

(Jon) In that scene you see the heart of God, a God who says, "I would give everything I have to buy every life I can." For ... "You were bought with a price," the apostle Peter says, "You know that you were ransomed ..., not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish."

And the elders and the living creatures of heaven see the Lamb, who with his own blood ransomed us, and they say: (5.12) "You are worthy." No kidding! "Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered -- to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." No kidding!

(Doc)(5.5) One more piece, all the way back up in verse 5. Do you remember the part where one of the elders told John to stop weeping, because the "Lion of Judah" had won the **victory**, and was worthy to open the scroll? This is a huge idea in the Revelation of John. In the letters to the 7 churches in chapters 2 and 3, every time, in every letter we see those words: "To the one who overcomes; to the one who conquers." In Greek it's the word, "nike." "Nike" uses the word as a name for their

company: “Victory.” When you think of “nike,” “Nike,” victory: whose face comes to mind. For you old guys, Michael Jordan? For you pups, LeBron? It’s the fourth quarter, the game could go either way, and they get that look in their eye ...

(Todd) The elder says to the old apostle John, “Dry your eyes! Look, the Lion of Judah, the heir to David’s throne ... he has won! He is worthy!” And John looks up and he sees ... a Lamb! But what a Lamb! He conquered sin by entering a broken world and living a flawless life. He conquered Satan by resisting all his temptations. He conquered death by dying, and then walking out of his tomb. He spit death in the eye! He was a Lamb with an attitude. And he shares his victory with you, and with me. The Bible says, “No! In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” In all things! Do you believe that?

(Jon) (5.11-14) “Then I looked again, and I heard the voices of thousands and millions of angels around the throne and of the living beings and the elders. And they sang in a mighty chorus: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered -- to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.” And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: “Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.” And the four living beings said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped the Lamb.”

(Doc) What will that feel like? Think about how people treat Jesus today. Think about how we marginalize Jesus today. Profane words, angry words, hypocritical words, arrogant words, deceitful words – no more words like that. No more parents yelling at a child; no more husbands tearing down their wives, or wives belittling their husbands; no more friends betraying their friends, or even their enemies. Instead a single song of inexpressible beauty sung by all creation – in heaven and earth, honoring the one who is worthy...

That’s worship. That’s what’s coming; and that’s what we get to try to express right now. It’s not about you; it’s not about what you like to sing; it’s not about how you like to sing it. It’s about giving honor any way we can to the one who is worthy, from the bottom of our heart. Let’s worship.