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Revelation 22

Who is worthy to break seals!

Revelation 5:1-4

Revelation 5:1-14, *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. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 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. 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. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

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: "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, ¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth." 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: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honour and glory and blessing!" 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 honour and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!" ¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

This is the second vision.

The first one was a vision of Christ in chapter 1.

Letters to the churches in chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4, the scene changes.

We go from earth to heaven and the throne of God.

The theme in **chapter 4 and 5** is worship in heaven.

For us to understand the essence of worship.

This is about heavenly worship which is perfected worship around the throne of God.

Now when we talk about worship it is very familiar to Christians.

We don't always understand the essence of worship.

Worship in heaven goes from **Revelation 4:8-5:14**.

The vision that John has in chapters 4 and 5 is really a vision of God beginning to crank up the wheels of His wrath.

Incredible look at worship in heaven and the worship of God for His creation in chapter 4.

For His redemption, in chapter 5.

Many have desired to rule the world.

Lucifer, son of the morning, the anointed cherub who is now known as Satan, the adversary, the devil. He desired to rule the world and the universe.

Humanly there was

- Nebuchadnezzar.
- Darius.
- Alexander the Great.
- Genghis Khan.
- Napoleon.

- Hitler.
- Lenin.
- Stalin and many others.

Someday there will be Antichrist, the most powerful human who will ever represent Satan in the world and set to conquer the world.

All of them have and will fail.

Only one individual has the right and power to take back the universe from sin and Satan's rebellion. That one is described here in Revelation chapter 5.

No one else is worthy.

There is only one who is capable to conqueror the world, and we meet Him in this chapter.

Revelation 4:1, *After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

The scene then is the throne of God, the cherubim, the 24 elders on their thrones are there.

The scene unfolding action in chapter 4 that will yield the judgment that starts in chapter 6.

God begins to move.

God is about to unleash His wrath and to ignite the tribulation. At the end of tribulation, the Lord takes back the universe.

V 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.*

God is sitting in the midst of all of the light, the glory, the flashing, the thunder, and the praise and adoration.

The first thing God does is reach out His hand.

God is visibly seen in some kind of human form by John in this vision, and on His upturned palm sits a scroll.

John says, "I saw it."

V 2, "And I saw."

V 6, "And I saw."

V 11, "And I saw."

John is still in this amazing vision, and he is reporting exactly what he sees. He is an eyewitness to the future unfolding of God's judgment as He sets out to take back His universe.

Almighty God sitting with the outstretched hand.

John sees a scroll.

In ancient times they didn't have books.

Prior to the invention of the book, they had a scroll, and it was usually rolled up from both ends into the middle.

The document was written on the scroll.

Something was written on the inside and on the back.

The scroll would have been made possibly out of papyrus in ancient times, which was a reed of parchment. Or animal skin.

V 1, *a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.*

The Romans sealed a will seven times.

When somebody wrote their will they sealed it seven times.

The scroll was rolled up, they would seal the edge of it so that it would be sealed repeatedly until it was finally closed. You couldn't open it unless you periodically broke a seal. The seal would be on the edge. That prevented people from looking at it without the authorization.

These two features give us some clues as to the nature of the scroll and its contents.

The fact is this was typical of a contract in the ancient world.

In Ancient times in the Middle East, it was used by the Romans from the time of Nero on. The full contract would be written on the inner pages and then sealed with seven seals. The content of the contract would be described briefly on the outside.

It was very important once it was sealed multiple times and couldn't be opened by any unauthorized person to write on the outside of the scroll something that would describe what was in it.

All kinds of transactions were consummated this way, including marriage contracts, rental and lease agreements, release of slaves, contract, bills, and even bonds.

The Hebrew document most closely resembling this scroll was a title deed, which was folded and signed, requiring at least three witnesses. A portion of the text would be written and then sealed with a different witness signing at each sealing. The larger number of witnesses meant that more importance was assigned to the document.

This scroll is some kind of a contract or a deed.

The details are on the inside, unknown to us.

The summary of what is on the inside is on the outside. It would then be sealed to make it authentic with wax or clay or some other soft material.

Jeremiah 32.

Jeremiah lived in the day just prior to the fall of Jerusalem, which resulted in Babylonian captivity. The Jews were being taken as captive **605, 597, and 586 B.C.**

Jeremiah lived just prior to that. When Nebuchadnezzar began to conquer and destroy, and take captive the people of Judah.

Jeremiah the prophet had been telling his people that they would be judged by God. He told them that because of their continuing sin soon they will be taken into captivity.

Prior to Jeremiah the prophet Isaiah said the same thing.

God was going to send a conqueror. They were going to be destroyed and devastated, dispossessed of their land, and taken into captivity. The captivity will last for **seventy years.**

Jeremiah had preached this and everybody knew it.
Jeremiah had a cousin by the name of **Hanamel.**

Hanamel had a piece of ground. He was a shrewd businessman. He knew that once the conquering army came and took them out of the land, his land would be worthless.

So, being a shrewd businessman, he wanted to sell it and get all the money while the land still had value.

He had to make his transaction rapidly because of the impending disaster. It would then be under the control of enemies, and it wouldn't do him any good at all.

Jeremiah 32, the siege is already in the land. By this time, a field in Jeremiah's hometown of Anathoth was occupied by the Babylonian army. They were already moving toward Jerusalem.

Hanamel was desperate.

Jeremiah 32:7, *'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it."'*

Strangely, he went to Jeremiah to try to find a buyer.

Jeremiah 32:8, *Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.*

This sounds like a ridiculous thing to do, absurd.

Jeremiah's going to be dead before the captivity is over, so is Hanamel.

Jeremiah 32:9-10, *So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money—seventeen shekels of silver.¹⁰ And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales.*

Sealed the deed. The deed then would have been carrying all the data about the land, it would mark out the boundaries of the land and it would give a clear title to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 32:11, *So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open;*

Very similar to the double writing in the sealed document in **Revelation 5**.

The sealed document is kept in the file, never to be opened, and it is written on the outside as a summary of what's in it.

Jeremiah 32:12-15, *and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.¹³ "Then I charged Baruch before them, saying,¹⁴ 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many*

days.”¹⁵ For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.”’

Like having a notary. Everybody saw it. Everybody signed on to it. It was legitimate and legal.

The promise of God that there would be a return.

There will be a restoration. There would be a time coming back into the land.

Jeremiah 29:10, *For thus says the Lord: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.*

Such deeds typically were written and sealed, and then put in an earthen jar, and even buried in the ground.

The land belonged then to Jeremiah, but he wasn't going to possess it. He was to be driven out. He was to be rejected. He was to die.

But some day his heirs would come back in return, and they would have the authority to break the seals and take the land.

That little scroll was the title deed to the inheritance of the land.

Similarly, here is a title deed. It is a title deed to the earth. The earth and the universe came into captivity in the fall.

But the document that displays who really owns it, God has had all the time in His possession. He authored it. He has a rightful claim to it.

The little scroll on the upturned hand of Almighty God seated on the throne is the official document that grants the created universe to the Lord Himself to be reclaimed from Satan and his demons and men who have occupied it during God's absence.

The worship runs through chapters 4 and 5.

In chapter 4, worship of redemption of creation.

In chapter 5, worship of the redeemed.

It involves the whole of the universe as well as the redemption of God's own purchase possession in Christ.

The contents of this little scroll differ from the usual details that spell out ownership.

The title deed to the universe.

The universe is so long, so high, so wide, and so deep, and God is the rightful owner.

You need to write the pertinent data to the description of the owner and pertinent data to the description of what it is that He owns.

Since that would be an utter impossibility to write down, **how can you write down an infinite possession?**

How can you describe the parameters of an infinite ownership?

How can you describe or identify the heritage of an eternal God?

The unrolling of the scroll then describes how the Lord will take back His rightful possession.

The scroll then contains not descriptions of the earth and the universe, nor descriptions of God Himself.

But detailed descriptions of

- ✓ His judgments,
- ✓ His attacks,
- ✓ His wrath,
- ✓ His vengeance, and
- ✓ His repossession of what is rightfully His.

The scroll contains the full account of how the Lord Jesus Christ, the rightful heir, will take back what is His by an acting, severe wrath.

Then the scroll is of doom!

So, here in the hand of almighty, sovereign, holy and glorious God is the plan to judge the wicked universe and bring the whole thing into the control of the One who is the rightful heir, the Lord Jesus Christ.

This little scroll will carry in it the repulsive destiny of the unsaved world and the fallen angels. The purging power of God's wrath is described. The effects of sin and its disastrous impact on this universe, and how they will be ended and reversed.

The consequences of this scroll's contents are immeasurable and eternal.

This is the reason why it can't even be described in those terms, but only in the terms of the actual action by which it is taken back.

What we have is the official document that determines the apex of human history as God takes back His universe.

Ezekiel sees a vision similar to this one in Chapter 1. In chapter 2 a very similar statement is made like in Revelation 5.

- The vision of Ezekiel chapter 1 parallels the vision of Revelation 4.
- The sealed scroll of Ezekiel chapter 2 parallels the sealed scroll of Revelation 5.

Ezekiel 2:9-10, *Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. ¹⁰ Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe.*

The same scroll when Ezekiel goes to heaven in his vision, he sees the hand of God with the same scroll.

The scroll is sealed, but he can see a little of what is written on the outside of it, and it is lamentations, mourning and woe.

He doesn't spell it out in detail, but only a summary. Sad and frightening summary.

Daniel 12:4, *“But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”*

Seal up the scroll, what does that mean?

Throughout Daniel's prophecy he has been receiving revelations and visions about the future.

Particularly from chapter 10 on, he has been receiving prophecies of future judgment at the end of the age.

He has even gotten information about the Antichrist. How his career is going to go, and what his battle plan and operation is like. After the vision of the future time of tribulation, the career of Antichrist and his operation is done.

The Lord says to Daniel, “Roll up the scroll and seal it until the end of time.”

God giving this instruction from the Angel telling Daniel to set that material aside until the future time when it is to be opened. There is only one person who has the right to open and has the power to enact what is written in it.

Daniel 12:4, *seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro,*

Someone searching and searching for information and understanding, for truth.

2 Chronicles 16:9, Jeremiah 5:1, Jeremiah 49:3, Amos 8:12, Zechariah 4:10, is mentioned to and fro.

At the time of the end, people are going to be running around, trying to find the answers to what is happening, the career of Antichrist, all the beginnings and unfolding of divine judgment.

They are going to be desiring to know and to understand and comprehend and grasp all of this.

They will be moving around trying to get some answers.

Daniel 12:4, *and knowledge shall increase.*”

The Spirit of God is saying through the glorious angel to Daniel is that they are going to find some answers.

Some people are going to find the answers.

There are people in the end times when the judgments begin and the scroll begins to be unrolled at the end of the age that are going to panic, and to want to know the truth. They are going to run to find it.

Some of them are going to end up in Daniel.

Some are going to end up in Revelation.

Ultimately, they are going to end up with the knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is why in **Revelation 7:1-9**, there will be an innumerable number of Gentiles converted from every tongue and tribe and people and nation, along with 144,000 Jews who are God’s evangelists.

There will be in that time a great salvation movement of God worldwide as people run to and fro in the midst of the unfolding judgment to find the answers.

There will be the greatest harvest of souls for the kingdom of any period in history. Millions may turn to Scripture for answers to what is happening in the world, and knowledge will increase. They will find the answers.

When will this book be unsealed?

Daniel 12:5-6, *Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank. ⁶And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long shall the fulfilment of these wonders be?"*

Daniel sees one angel on one side of the river, another angel on the other side of the river, and over the top of the river is this man dressed in linen.

Two angels ask the question which Daniel wanted to ask.
How long will it be until the end of these wonders?
When is the scroll opened up and completed?

Daniel 10:5-6, *I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! ⁶His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of*

lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in colour, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

Does that sound like Revelation chapter 1?

Indeed, it does.

The One in fine linen is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in a preincarnate appearance.

Daniel had the same reaction that John had in chapter 1 of Revelation.

Daniel 10:7, *And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.*

They didn't see the vision, but the whole thing scared them even though they couldn't see it.

Now we don't know what they were reacting to, but there were some phenomena. Probably means they couldn't clearly discern what was going on.

Daniel 10:8-9, *Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength.⁹ Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.*

You don't do that purposely. He was knocked into a coma by the frightening experience of seeing the exalted second member of the Trinity.

Here is the image of one who is

Linen symbolizes holy.

The gold belt symbolizes sovereign.

Beryl speaks of glory.

Lightning indicates He is powerful.

His feet are burnished bronze.

He is omnipotent in His judgment.

He is omniscient. His eyes are like flaming torches.

We are not surprised when we study Daniel 12th chapter.

Daniel 12:8, *Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what shall be the end of these things?"*

The man dressed in linen above the waters of the river is none other than the preincarnate Christ.

Because the scroll is now sealed.

How long is it going to be sealed?

If anybody knows, He does.

Daniel 12:7, *Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that it shall be for a time, times, and half a time; and*

when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished.

Going to come in a three- and half-year period. The great tribulation.

It is going to come after the shattering of the power of the holy people.

The breaking of Israel.

After Israel is broken through suffering and persecution and devastation.

Who is it that brings that upon them?

Antichrist.

We have a tribulation time of seven years.

For the first half of the tribulation, Antichrist makes a pact with Israel.

In the middle of the seven years, according to **Matthew 24, Daniel, and Revelation**, there is going to be a tremendous movement against Israel. It's called the abomination of desolations by Daniel and by our Lord in **Matthew 24**.

During the middle of that week the Antichrist has had a peace pact with Israel, he violates it, he starts to persecute them. Beginning of the three-and-a-half years.

This time the full contents of that scroll are unleashed. Seven seals are broken, seven trumpets blow, and seven bowls of wrath are poured out in furious judgment.

But it is after the breaking or the shattering of the power of the holy people.

What does that mean?

After Satan and Antichrist have been used to devastate Israel.

That devastation becomes their point of salvation, because they lose their self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and they are persecuted and devastated.

Zechariah 12:10, *“And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

Zechariah 13:1, *“In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*

After Israel is devastated, after Israel is converted in their brokenness, then the full events will be completed.

They start out at the beginning of the seven years moving slowly, and then they escalate in their speed until the very end is a rapid fire pouring out of bowls one after the other.

Daniel 12:9-13, *And he said, "Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand. ¹¹ "And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. ¹² Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. ¹³ "But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."*

1290 days is 3 and ½ years.

Revelation.

God holds in His hand now the book.

It's about to be opened.

What Ezekiel couldn't know, what Daniel couldn't know, we are going to know.

John is going to be the first person to see it and to hear it.

This little book has to do with the redemption of God's created universe and everything that is in it.

It is a scroll of doom, but it is also a scroll of redemption.

It is the book of the final acts of God.

It is the book concerning the liberation of the universe.

It is the book of the judgment of God and the supplanter who have tried to destroy what belongs to God.

It is the book that tells how the usurper and the cooperating men and demons will be judged and destroyed.

It is the book about the casting out of Satan, the destruction of the Dragon, and the ending of death and sin.

It is the book about the redemption of the whole purchased possession of God.

This is all going to unfold before us starting from here.

The rightful heir is going to come, and the scroll is going to be opened.

Inside of the scroll contains how it is going to become God's.

God is the Creator and the Redeemer.

He created it, and it belongs to Him.

He redeemed it, and it doubly belongs to Him.

Luke 21:28, *Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.*"

We stand then when we are in this chapter on the brink of this incredible movement of God.

To understand the chapter, we must divide it into three parts:

1. The search for the Worthy One,
2. The selection of the Worthy One, and
3. The song of the Worthy One.

The search for the worthy one.

V 2, *Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?"*

A strong angel with a loud voice. The word "proclaiming" has inherent in it speaking loudly and when you add loud to loud, you get very loud. This strong angel is shouting.

Why?

Because he wants his voice to penetrate every corner of the universe.

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

Who is qualified to break the seals?

Who is the rightful heir?

To whom belongs the inheritance?

Not only has to be worthy but he must be able.

V 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.*

Who can throw out Satan?

Who can wipe out demon power?

Who can destroy sinners?

Who can eradicate sin?

A strong angel.

The name Gabriel means “strength of God.”

Daniel 8:16, *And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, “Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”*

Maybe it’s Gabriel.

Who is worthy?

Who has the heritage?

Michael was there but he didn’t speak.

Gabriel was there and unless he asked the question, he didn’t speak either.

Thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels are there, and none of them speak.

Millions of Old Testament saints are there, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Elijah, Elisha, Moses, David, Job, Ezekiel, Daniel. None of them speak. Millions of New Testament saints are there, the apostles are there, the great missionaries of all of history of the church are there, the great saints, the godly are there, and none of them speak.

Nobody says anything.

V 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.*

Nobody.

Everywhere in the universe, heaven, earth, under the earth. A search of the universe physical, spiritual, a search from hell to heaven and all points in between, and no one is worthy.

No one can open it and look into it.

No one has the right, and no one has the power.

John's reaction is amazing.

V 4, *So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.*

There aren't supposed to be any tears in heaven. John is unrestrained in his emotions, and he is also only a visitor there.

These tears represent all God's people through all the centuries. Those tears of the apostle John are the tears of Adam and Eve driven out of the Garden of Eden as they bowed over the first grave, as they watered the dust of the ground with their tears over the silent still form of their son Abel. Those are the tears of the children of Israel in bondage as they cried unto God in their affliction and slavery. They are the tears of God's elect through the centuries as they cried unto heaven.

John wept audibly for the failure to find a redeemer, because it meant that this earth and its curse is consigned forever to death.

It meant that death and sin and damnation and hell should reign forever and ever, and the sovereignty of God's earth should remain forever in the hands of Satan.

He wept. But his weeping did not fit. He shouldn't have wept because of what was about to happen.

V 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."*

Do not weep.