**The Lamb**

Revelation 5

In Revelation chapter one ***we saw the glory of Jesus*** unveiled as John looked up to heaven and saw one like a Son of Man…

“And in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters.” Revelation 1:13-15

In chapters two and three, with ***the seven letters*** to the churches, we saw Jesus introduced in each letter as the One who:

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed**

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| * Who holds the 7 stars (2:1)
* Who died and rose to life (2:8)
* Who has the 2 edged sword (2:12)
 | * Who has eyes like fire (2:18)
* Who has the 7 spirits (3:1)
* Who has the key of David (3:7)
* Who is the faithful witness (3:14)
 |

Then we turned the page into chapter four and found ourselves in **the very throne room of God**. 4 living creatures surround the throne, each covered with eyes. 24 elders make another circle around the throne, responding to the worship of the creatures with worship of their own. The living creatures sang “holy, holy, holy.”

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| “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” 4:8 | “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power,for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” 4:11 |

The 24 elders sing “worthy.” In chapter four **we see only God on His throne**, exalted in glory, receiving the worship and honor due to His holy Name. The supernatural living creatures speak of His holiness and eternal nature. The human elders, representing Israel and the Church, sing the praises of our Lord and God who is worthy of all praise, glory and honor.

Then in chapter five, our eyes zoom in on ***something in the hand of God*** on His throne.

“Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?’” Revelation 5:1

No one is found worthy in all of the universe to take the scroll and open it. So John begins to weep. **God’s revelation is now kept from us**. His speech; His decree; His promises; His WORD remains hidden in His hand, for no one can open it.

Brothers, sisters, ***do we WEEP for the Word of God?*** Do we weep for ourselves when we don’t open this book? Do we groan deep inside when we miss a worship service or Bible study? Are our hearts broken for the remaining ***201 million people*** on earth who still do not have a single verse of Scripture in their language? Over a billion who do not have access to a complete Bible?

***John was devastated*** that God had a scroll written and sealed up, prepared for His people, but no one was worthy to open that scroll. But then one of the elders speaks:

“And one of the elders said to me, ‘Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.’” Revelation 5:5

Suddenly there is hope. There is victory. There is One who can open the scroll. ***We expect to see a lion***, roaring and ferocious. We expect to see a king, resplendent with a long royal cape and a shining golden crown. We expect to see a sword in his hand, covered in the blood of his enemies… But that is not what we see.

“And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.” Revelation 5:6

***Do you see what the book of Revelation is REVEALING?*** The glory of Jesus. And it’s not what anyone would have expected. **The glory of Jesus is His sacrifice**. His victory over death, by dying. His exaltation as Lord of all things following His humiliation before all people.

We lift our voices today, joining the saints and angels in the everlasting song: ***“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!”***

Today we will walk through Revelation 5 and see **the threefold glory of King Jesus** – the Lion of Judah, the root of David, the Lamb that was slain. And of course, these are only three of the infinite manifestations of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lion of Judah

“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah… has conquered.” Revelation 5:5

The driving question in this chapter, and in the whole book of Revelation, is ***“Who is worthy to open the scroll?”*** Who has the authority? Who has the righteousness? Who can stand before the holy God of heaven and speak on His behalf to the sinful people of this fallen, broken, dying world? Who can intercede for us? Is there hope for anyone?

Here is the answer. The Lion of Judah. This points us back to **the book of Genesis**. Abraham had a son when he was 100 years old and his wife was 90. A miracle, even in those ancient times. Abraham’s son Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau. The older one, Esau, was destined to serve the younger, Jacob. Then Jacob had twelve sons with four different women – it’s a complicated and messy story. But God’s sovereign grace shines through it, bringing good from evil intentions.

And in Genesis 48 Jacob speaks words of prophecy and blessing over each of his 12 sons. When he comes to JUDAH, the Spirit of God leads him to say:

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lion of Judah

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies…” Genesis 48:8

Of the twelve sons of Jacob, of the 12 tribes of Israel, ***Judah was God’s chosen line of blessing***, the one through whom the seed of Messiah would grow. Judah was the line of KINGS. Just as the 11 brothers bowed down to Joseph in Egypt, as foretold by his visions, so the whole nation of Israel would later bow down to King David. And from the line of Kings would come the true King, Jesus, to whom everyone on earth will one day bow.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lion of Judah

“Judah is a lion’s cub… he crouched as a lion… The scepter shall not depart from Judah.” Genesis 48:9-10

Ancient blessings were shaped by images like this one. Here Jacob sees in his son, Judah, ***potential for true greatness***, but still in kernel form. He is still only a lion’s cub. Will he grow into a mature and powerful ruler?

The book of ***Genesis is a wonderfully honest book***. It does not gloss over or cover up the truth of how things happened. It makes you think twice as a parent before you let your early reading children just “read the Bible.” You’ll have to answer questions like, “What is circumcision?” And, in the case of Judah, “What is a prostitute?”

***Judah did not do great in his married life or his parenting.*** In fact, he did quite poorly in both areas. It is true to say of him what God said to Cain back in Genesis 4, “Sin is crouching at your door, its desire is for you, but you must master it.” In that visual the lion stands for SIN and is threatening to pounce on and devour anyone who lets down their guard. Which Judah does, and sin chews him up a few times.

If one thing is clear in Genesis it is that ***the people God chooses are NOT PERFECT***. Including Abraham and Judah. But even in their imperfections, they point ahead to the saving work God is planning through their children and great-great-great-great grandchild.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lion of Judah
	* The **Faithful** Son of God conquered **Sin**

“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah… has conquered.” Revelation 5:5

Judah was the son of Jacob, and his descendants were the true kings of Israel. But ***Judah himself was NOT a faithful son of God***. He did not resist the enticements of sin perfectly, and faced consequences in his life and family as a result. The same was later true for his great-great-great grandson David, who let sin pounce on him a few times as well.

Jesus, on the other hand, descended from Judah, **WAS the faithful Son of God**. He never gave in to temptation and sin even one time. He was “tempted in every way as we are” the book of Hebrews tells us, “yet without sin.” ***Jesus succeeded at every point that Israel failed***. He was tempted in the wilderness, without food or water, but trusted in God the Father and resisted the false promises of the devil. He was challenged by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, but resisted every temptation to its fullest extent.

And, in the end, how did Jesus conquer sin? ***He triumphed over sin by BECOMING SIN for us.*** He let sin conquer him. He was covered in your sin and mine. It covered him, and He suffocated under the evil, wickedness and rebellion of sinners like you and me.

Just as **the great Lion Aslan** in the Narnia stories allowed the witch to shave off his beautiful mane and tie him to the stone table, so Jesus allowed evil men to condemn him, to beat him, to publicly humiliate him and execute him. And so, in this way, the Lion of Judah conquered. He defeated sin by taking it into his human body and letting it kill him.

So brother, sister - weep no more. The Lion of Judah has conquered. When pressed to the utter limit in the garden of Gethsemane, ***Jesus stood firm and said,*** “Not what I want, but what you want.” Your will be done.

***The question is, will we?*** When you are pushed to the limit, when sin is crouching at your door, will those selfish desires overcome you? Or will you bring every temptation to the Lord Jesus? Will you take captive every thought and bring it into obedience to Christ? Will you say, as Jesus did, “Not my will, but yours be done”?

***Will we be like the Lion of Judah*** who conquered, **or like Cain** who was conquered by the lion of sin? It crouched at his door and pounced on him when he got angry with his brother. Will we be the faithful sons and daughters of God, living according to His will, or will we be like the unfaithful people of Israel, so often going astray?

We worship the true, faithful Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, who conquered sin. Secondly:

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Root of David

 “The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered.” Revelation 5:5

Now we are getting into Ancestry.com. ***Jesus was not just descended from Judah, he was descended from DAVID***. You probably know the story of David and Goliath, when the young Jewish shepherd trusted God to give him victory over the Philistine giant. Saul was the actual king of Israel at that time, but he was a coward who did not trust God completely. David was probably only 15 or 16 at the time, but he was already passionate for the glory of God, and having a Philistine soldier taunting the nation of Israel was intolerable to David because those ***insults were really being thrown out against the God of Israel***.

In the end, after a lot of dramatic back and forth, God rejected Saul as king and anointed David to reign on the throne in Israel. And David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, but that honor had to wait for David’s son, Solomon. But in that conversation, God spoke through the prophet Nathan that David would not build a house for the Lord, but that the Lord would build a house for David.

“The Lord declares to you that ***the Lord will make you a house***. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body… and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” 2 Samuel 7:11-13

This was God promising to David not only that his son would also be a king of Israel, but that one of his descendants ***would reign over the people of God FOREVER***. Not just a long-lasting family line but an everlasting dynasty through ONE of David’s offspring.

But if you know the story of Israel you know that David’s descendants were IMMEDIATELY challenged for the throne. Solomon, David’s son, reigned over all of Israel. But Solomon’s son, Rehoboam immediately experienced **a civil war and the kingdom divided** north and south, just like the US in our civil war. So the physical descendants of David, like Judah their ancestor, were not faithful sons of God.

But a faithful Son was coming in the form of a baby born to a virgin. And look at what Isaiah said about this coming son of David.

“There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Isaiah 11:1-2

Here is the specific reference, the hyperlink from Revelation 5 from **the ROOT OF DAVID**. The fact of history was that the line of David was broken. When Babylon conquered Jerusalem and the last king descended from David was taken away into exile, the line was broken.

Until Jesus.

This is ***why Matthew and Luke both include detailed genealogies*** tracing the lineage of Jesus. Even though Joseph wasn’t Jesus’ biological father, his genealogy still mattered to the Jewish people. And even though Jesus’ heritage wasn’t legally dependent on Mary, her lineage DID matter because Jesus’ bloodline actually did go through her. Both Mary and Joseph were descended from King David, which is why they had to go to Bethlehem for the registration demanded by Caesar Augustus.

***David’s line was a tree that had been chopped down.*** But, as anyone knows who does tree removal, your job isn’t done if the stump is still there. And Isaiah gives us a glimmer of hope with this vision of a shoot from the stump of Jesse (that’s the name of David’s father).

Isaiah 11 goes on with a beautiful vision of this Root of David:

“With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.” Isaiah 11:4-5

In other words, “The Root of David has conquered.” This descendant of David will triumph over the enemies of God and bring justice and righteousness to the earth.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Root of David
	* The **Victorious** King of kings conquered **Evil**

 “With righteousness he shall judge the poor… and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.” Isaiah 11:4-5

Notice ***HOW the true King would conquer evil***. Not with a physical sword, but with the “breath of his lips,” the sword of his mouth. And the result would be faithfulness, justice, righteousness and PEACE - true shalom - on the earth, as the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fills the earth. Read the rest of Isaiah 11 and be inspired.

**Is your heart singing the hymn of heaven yet**? “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!”

Jesus is the faithful Son. Jesus is the victorious king. ***Through His death and resurrection he dealt the fatal blow to sin and evil.*** Yes, their presence and power remain on this earth for a little while longer, but Jesus is coming back soon to remove the last traces of sin and evil from this world.

***So weep no more.*** Lift your heads. Look up, for your salvation is drawing near! King Jesus is coming and His reward is with Him. His recompense in His right hand. ***The Root of David grew up like a tender shoot***, born as a helpless baby to a poor, insignificant virgin in Israel. And throughout his earthly life Jesus remained weak and vulnerable. He never became a powerful earthly king or even a particularly influential philosopher.

Yes, he had a small following through his three years as a traveling rabbi. But all told his following after his death was just 120 faithful believers. Half the size of Oakwood. Only after Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out, did 3,000 Jewish people join the early church.

Jesus himself was tremendously vulnerable, and the movement he started remained very weak and vulnerable in its early stages. ***But God’s power is made perfect in human weakness.*** God’s light shines brightest against the backdrop of human darkness. And the message is: the love of Jesus overcomes. His grace conquers sin, evil and death. Look at verse 10.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Root of David
	* The **Victorious** King of kings conquered **Evil**

 “And you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:10

***How is Jesus continuing to press his victory against sin and evil?*** **THROUGH US**. Through the Church. Israel was meant to be a kingdom of priests, mediating God’s grace and law to the nations. They failed as such mediators, including most of their priests and kings.

But Jesus is building His Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. The Church is not defending the gates. Hell is. ***The Church is advancing against the gates of death*** and hell, and we are guaranteed victory by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. “Not by might or by power but by my Spirit says the Lord.”

Brothers and sisters, **we will reign on the earth forever** under King Jesus in the new heaven and new earth. But that reign begins NOW as we serve as ambassadors for the kingdom of God in THIS dark and broken world. The reign of King Jesus began with His resurrection and He continues to extend that rule through us, as we pray - as He did - “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”

So weep no more. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has conquered. Do you feel the joy of that victory? Is your heart filled up to sing His praises? WORTHY! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain. One more dimension of the glory of Jesus in Revelation 5.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lamb slain for us

“I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes…” Revelation 5:6

The elder told John to weep no more because the Lion of Judah, the Root of David has conquered. Again, **we expect to turn and see a Lion, a King**, a triumphant warrior, a sharp sword in his hand, a crown of glory on his head.

But what do we see? A Lamb. ***Bloody. Slain. But STANDING***.

Here is a mystery. How can a Lamb with its throat slit and blood dripping down be STANDING? It couldn’t be. ***Slaughtered lambs just lay there in their blood.*** Then they are placed on the altar as a sacrifice and they are burned up before Him.

But not THIS LAMB. This Lamb was STANDING before the throne of God. And this was no ordinary lamb. ***Seven horns and seven eyes***, standing for the seven spirits of God or the sevenfold-Spirit of God sent out into all the earth. The Trinity rings out all over the book of Revelation. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Don’t miss that point. In Revelation 4 it is just God on the throne receiving worship. Now ***the Lamb appears and receives the SAME worship as God on the throne***. And the Holy Spirit is mentioned in the same breath as the Lamb. You cannot separate out the Godhead. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are eternally ONE and equally worthy of our worship and praise.

We see the Lamb, slaughtered but standing, and he goes and very simply, without any fanfare, takes the scroll from the hand of God on the throne.

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lamb slain for us

“And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb.” Revelation 5:8

In exactly the same way they had fallen down before the throne, the elders now fall down before the Lamb.

***Do you see THE REVELATION HERE?*** Jesus, the Son of God, is not less than God. He is FULLY GOD. He is equal with God the Father on the throne. Jesus Christ is LORD.

***What does this book reveal?*** Yes, it includes things “that must soon take place.” But primarily do you see what it IS and what it DOES? It completes the revelation of the mystery in the entire New Testament that is summed up in the gospel: **Jesus Christ is Lord.**

1. The Lamb slain for us
	* The **Sacrifice** that saves sinners conquered **Death**

“And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll, and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people…’” Revelation 5:9

Through his death on the cross **Jesus paid the RANSOM** to set us free from our slavery to sin. He redeemed you and me.

Now, let’s remember the Old Testament background of the Lamb that was slain. This takes us back to the Passover. ***The people of Israel were SLAVES in Egypt.*** They were powerless. They were oppressed. They had no way to save themselves. So God sent Moses to speak to Pharoah and say, over and over, “Let my people go.” Pharaoh said No and the rest is history.

**Ten plagues demonstrating the superiority of the God of Israel** over all the gods of Egypt, including Pharaoh himself. The death of every firstborn son in the whole area of Egypt may sound harsh to our modern ears, but Pharaoh called himself the Son of God, a clear claim to full divinity. The true God said to Egypt, “You want to go head to head, let’s see how that works out.” It proved very costly for Pharaoh and everyone else in Egypt who did not sacrifice a Passover Lamb.

Moses instructed the people of Israel to ***choose a one-year-old unblemished lamb*** for each household. They slaughtered the lamb at twilight and painted the lamb’s blood onto the doorposts of their house, the uprights and the crossbar above. It was visible. It wasn’t going to come off any time soon. There was no halfway with that. You either did it or you did not.

That night the angel of death flew over Egypt, and when he saw the blood of a lamb, he passed over that house and everyone lived. ***Where he did NOT see the blood, the oldest son died.***

That was the last of the ten plagues. ***It was the final proof of God’s supremacy.*** Finally, Pharaoh relented and let the people Go. Of course, he very quickly changed his mind and chased them to the Red Sea, a decision that ended up costing him his whole army.

That event - the Passover - was central to the identity of the people of Israel. ***The PRICE of their REDEMPTION was the blood of a lamb.*** A healthy, pure white, unblemished, one year old, adorable lamb.

When Jesus appeared publicly to Israel, John the Baptist announced him with these words: ***“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*** Jesus is the Lamb who was slain for you and me to pay the price for our sin, taking it all upon himself. And praise the Lord, He is the Lamb that was slain and yet is STANDING, for he rose from the dead, victorious over sin and death forever.

So here is our summary for today:

**The Glory of Jesus Revealed:**

1. The Lion of Judah
	* The **Faithful** Son of God conquered **Sin**
2. The Root of David
	* The **Victorious** King of kings conquered **Evil**
3. The Lamb slain for us
	* The **Sacrifice** that saves sinners conquered **Death**

***The throne room scene*** of chapter 4 brings us into the glorious presence of God on His throne, with heavenly creatures and human elders bowing down in worship of the eternal Creator of all things. Then in chapter 5 the camera zooms in on a scroll in the hand of God, and no one is worthy to open it. So, John weeps openly.

But then one of the elders tells him to ***stop crying***, because the Lion of Judah, the Root of David has conquered. He IS worthy to open the scroll. Jesus is the faithful Son of God who conquered sin, compared to Israel who continually gave in to sin. Jesus is the victorious king in the line of David who not only defeated the enemies of Israel, but who defeated evil itself by dying on the cross.

Then we see a figure before the throne, but it isn’t a lion or a king. ***It’s a slaughtered lamb.*** And the 4 living creatures and the 24 elders fall down before the Lamb singing praise to HIM. For He is the sacrifice that saved sinners and conquered death.

Jesus is Lord. He conquered sin, evil and death for us.

Now, notice the beautiful progression.



At first it is just the 4 creatures praising God. Then the 24 elders bow down and praise Him. Then Those 28 join together in worship, bowing down before the Lamb in chapter 5. And then all the angels in heaven add their voices to the chorus of praise, until finally, all living things “in heaven and on earth and under the earth” are giving praise, glory, honor and blessing to God on the throne AND to the Lamb.

“And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ and the elders fell down and worshiped.” Revelation 5:13-14

The five anthems of praise are intentionally very similar to each other, showing that ***the Lamb is completely EQUAL to God on the throne***. The same blessing and glory and honor and praise given to God the Father is, in turn, given to God on the throne and the Lamb together.

And as the praises to our Triune God grow and spread out, what started right next to God’s throne spreads to every part of creation, with every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea joining in the song. We have the great privilege of adding our voices to that song in just a minute.

Let’s pray together!