

# REVELATION—UNVEILING THE END, ACT 1 THE HEAVENLY STAGE

## STUDY TWELVE

### Worthy Is the Lamb

*Revelation 5:1–14*

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*In the future, we will see Jesus in a different role than we've ever known Him. We've always known Him as Servant, Savior, Redeemer, Forgiver, and even Friend. In the book of the Revelation, however, we see Jesus in a new role that is essential for the fulfillment of prophecy as well as the plan God has arranged. It is essential there be the judgment upon this earth.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**I**F you look around most American courtrooms, you will see the same cast of characters. The defendant, who stands under the inspection of the law. The prosecutor or plaintiff, who brings the accusation. The attorneys, who represent the parties involved in the case. The witnesses, who testify to the case. The jurors, who listen to the case and collectively decide the verdict based on the evidence.

Yet no courtroom is complete without a *judge*. He or she sits in a central, elevated seat for all to see. The judge knows the law better than anyone else in the room. Judges spend years mastering the history of its composition, the nature of its complexities, and the application of its content. Indeed, only the judge is worthy to oversee the legal proceedings, issue the sentence, and strike the gavel that closes the case. Good judges help cleanse their communities of crime and uphold justice.

Our world needs good judges—those who can bring an end to those injustices which often bring us to tears. Violence, deception, betrayal, and hatred tear apart families and nations. We long for the day when sin sits on the stand and is sentenced to its execution. Yet no mere human judge can defeat the full power of sin.

For that reason, our world needs a *divine* judge to enact complete justice.

Because Jesus Christ is perfectly righteous and holy and powerful, only He is worthy to declare Satan, sin, and death, “*Guilty!*” Though we daily feel the biting pain of these powers, we can praise God because Jesus will soon return to bang the gavel and forever rid His precious creation of evil.



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## PREPARE YOUR HEART

Say this prayer as you prepare to search the Scriptures today:

*Father, every day, I feel evil pressing in on me. I watch sin harming those I love. I sense death looming ever closer. Yet, I praise You because I know that You have the final word. As I open my Bible today, give me confidence as I await the return of Jesus to judge the wickedness of this world. In His just name I pray. Amen.*



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The central message of the New Testament is that Jesus is *the Christ*. The Greek term *Christ* is a translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah*, which refers to someone who is anointed. In the Old Testament, several groups received anointing, like kings, prophets, and priests. Jesus Christ fulfills all these roles and many more.

[Deuteronomy 16:18–20](#) tells of another anointed office in the community of Israel. What was this other role that Jesus fulfilled? What were the essential responsibilities of this role?

Now, let's turn to [Revelation 5:1–14](#) to see what makes Jesus a *worthy* judge.



## Observation: The Slaughtered Lamb

John's sequence of visions continues in [Revelation 5:1–14](#). As you read these verses, focus specifically on observing what John says rather than speculating about what the images might represent.<sup>1</sup> We will focus on the meaning of John's words in the interpretation phase.

The next thing John noticed in his vision of God's heavenly throne room was a scroll. According to [5:1](#), how did John describe this scroll?

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In [Revelation 5:2](#), a strong angel asked, “Who is worthy to break the seals on this scroll and open it?” What did John conclude in [5:3](#), and how did he react to this conclusion in [5:4](#)?

How did one of the twenty-four elders respond to John in [5:5](#)?

In [5:5](#), the elder directed John’s attention to “the Lion of the tribe of Judah.” Yet, when John turned in [5:6](#), He didn’t see a lion. What did John see instead?

According to [5:8–10](#), how did the four living beasts and the twenty-four elders respond when the Lamb took the scroll? Why did they consider the Lamb worthy to break the scroll’s seals and open it?

In [5:11–13](#), the rest of the angelic host joined the chorus of worship. According to this song of praise, what is the Lamb worthy to receive? What rightly belongs to Him?

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*This is the most glorious chorus of praise ever. And one day, your voice will be heard in it, and my voice will be heard in it. Is that great or what?*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



## **Interpretation: The Living Lamb**

When John realized that no one in the heavenly throne room could open the scroll, he wept. Why did the sealed scroll cause John such sorrow? To answer this question, you may need to preview what occurs in Revelation's coming chapters. For additional guidance, feel free to consult your Bible-study tools, like Pastor Chuck's commentary, *Insights on Revelation*.<sup>2</sup> For a free online resource, check out [Constable's Notes](http://netbible.org) at netbible.org.

*Revelation 5:1–14* identifies Jesus both as the Lion of Judah and as the slaughtered lamb. How is Jesus the slaughtered lamb? How is He the Lion of Judah? Why is Jesus as the Lion of Judah important in this chapter and in Revelation in general?

In *5:5*, one of the elders tells John that Jesus is worthy to open the scroll because He “has won the victory.” Then, in *5:9*, the angelic chorus sings that He is worthy because He was slaughtered. This seems like a paradoxical statement. How did Jesus achieve victory *by* being slaughtered? What did He do that makes Him worthy to open this scroll? Remember to consult your resources.

*There is only one qualified to be judge. That's why He's the object of our worship and the subject of our praise. How reassuring the role that Christ will fill as these events unfold!* —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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## Correlation: The Passover Lamb

The words of *Revelation 5:1–14* recalled one of Israel’s most significant and long-standing traditions: the Passover. Read *Exodus 12:1–13*. In your own words, summarize the custom of the Passover lamb. What kind of lamb did God command the people to select? What were they to do with the lamb? What would happen if they did (or did *not*) obey Him?

The people of Israel celebrated the festival of the Passover every year to look back in remembrance of God’s faithfulness to deliver them from slavery in Egypt. Yet not every Israelite might have realized that this custom also looked *ahead* to the coming of another Lamb.

In what ways did the Passover anticipate the arrival of Jesus, the suffering servant of Israel (see *Isaiah 53*)? What are the parallel results of the deaths of these two spotless lambs?

The sacrifice of lambs, no matter how pure and white, would never be enough to satisfy God’s wrath against sin. Only the death of the *holy* Lamb—His own Son—could do that. Jesus’ death was the final sacrifice. Through His resurrection, He now offers this redemption that He purchased and eternal life that He earned. Those who trust Him may still experience physical death, but the second death will pass them over.



## Application: The Redeeming Lamb

When John realized Jesus could unseal the scroll of redemption, he stopped weeping because he knew that Jesus would finally right all the world’s wrongs. Based on this passage, Pastor Chuck listed three reasons for us to rejoice:

- It’s *comforting* for believers in Jesus Christ to know their ultimate destination.
- It’s *reassuring* to know that the Lamb of God is qualified to carry out God’s plan.
- It’s *thrilling* to engage in the worship and praise of Jesus Christ while we wait.

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How does knowing Jesus is the worthy judge offer you comfort in your present circumstances? How does Jesus' authority and your promised future influence how you live today?

In what ways have you tried to handle the injustices, small or big, of this world rather than waiting patiently for Jesus to set things right? What does it look like practically to trust Him to carry out God's plan?

The chorus of heavenly angels offered a brief—yet powerful—list of their reasons for praising God. For what other reasons do *you* praise God? List some specific, personal reasons why He deserves your worship.

You may look at the world around you and feel like weeping. There's so much sin, death, pain, and injustice. Creation is groaning for a judge to sentence this evil to its eternal demise. It often feels like no one can set things right. Thankfully, there is a worthy judge. His name is Jesus. He is our friend, our Savior, our Lord. And He will return as the perfect, righteous judge creation has awaited for so long. So let's praise Him while we wait in hope.

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## ENDNOTES

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Insights on Revelation*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2014).

For the 2024 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Brad Smith, writer and content strategist, *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 2003, 2024 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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