

## The Lamb Is Worthy

Lesson Scripture: Revelation 5

Focus Scripture: Revelation 5:1-10

*Key Verse: They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation." Revelation 5:9*

### REVELATION 5:1-10 (NRSV UE)

1 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals,

2 and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.

4 And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, with seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne.

8 When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

9 They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to break its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation;

### REVELATION 5:1-10(KJV)

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kin-



10 you have made them a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.”

dred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

### KEY TERMS

- **Ransom** – Payment to free people from captivity or punishment; as used in the New Testament, ransom refers to the atoning work of Jesus Christ, which he describes as his purpose: “For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).
- **Root of David** – Refers to Jesus Christ; in fulfillment of Old Testament promises of the Messiah, Jesus descended from the lineage of King David.

### INTRODUCTION

This lesson, from the book of Revelation, gives us a glimpse into the future for humankind and an opportunity to experience through the visions of the Apostle John, the worthiness of Jesus Christ as our redeemer. The book of Revelation is filled with symbolism, imagery, and metaphors that are not always easily interpreted. However, in today’s scriptures, John shares a heavenly vision that most can easily understand and appreciate – especially the hope that it conveys as we gain greater understandings

about Jesus and the significance of his role in our salvation.

### TELLING THE BIBLE STORY

In these scriptures, John describes one of the heavenly scenes or visions that he witnessed while he was exiled on the Isle of Patmos. This is a dramatic scene wherein John sees God on his throne with a scroll,

sealed with seven seals, in his hand. The number seven is significant as it symbolizes completeness or perfection in biblical history, and the scroll is significant because it contains the full account of God’s future plans for the world. The seven seals represent the first in a series of judgments. Seven trumpets will also be included.

In these scriptures,  
John describes one of  
the heavenly scenes  
or visions that he  
witnessed while he was  
exiled on the Isle of  
Patmos.

### Opening the Scroll, Revelation 5:1-5

The scroll, according to John, was written on both sides and sealed with seven seals. Much to John’s dismay, however, the scroll could not be opened immediately. This was no ordinary scroll! Whoever opened it had to have special, pure, and holy qualifications to do so. A mighty angel reported having

searched extensively, only to have found no one, who was worthy to open the scroll, or to look inside of it. In fact, no one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth was found to be worthy (vs. 2-4). How could the world benefit if the contents of the scroll could not be revealed? As John began to cry, one of the elders brought good news! He encouraged John not to weep because “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and the seven seals” (Revelation 5:5).

### The Worthy One Is Revealed, Revelation 5:5-7

The Lion of Judah and Root of David is Jesus Christ. He is worthy, according to the elder, because he has “triumphed and conquered.” To us, Jesus’ triumphs are reflected in his having lived a perfect

life in obedience to God, having died on the cross for the sins of the world, and having been raised from the dead before ascending into heaven to sit on the right side of God the Father. This is also fulfillment of Jesus’ promise in John 16:33b wherein he declared, “In the world you face persecution, but take courage: I have conquered the world.”

Jesus is presented as both a lion and

a lamb. The lion symbolizes his authority and power, and the lamb symbolizes his submission to God’s will. This is the same Christ who died on the cross for our sins! He now appears in heaven, as a lamb (v. 6), with the looks of one who has been slain, and he is now standing in the center of the throne. He also has seven horns and seven eyes, which are symbolic of Jesus’ total power as well as complete knowledge. He is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.

Jesus is presented as both a lion and a lamb. The lion symbolizes his authority and power, and the lamb symbolizes his submission to God’s will.

The *Worthy Lamb* takes the scroll from God’s right hand. As he did so, there was great joy! All present (the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders) fell down at the feet of the *Worthy Lamb* and to worship him. The new song they sang is our **Key Verse** for this lesson.

### SANKOFA

John’s visions encourage us to continue in our faith. As we look at the *Worthy Lamb*, who looked like he has been slain, we are reminded of Jesus’ encouragements cited above in John 16:33b. There are people in our history who have not only reported having been blessed by God to have visions, but to have also acted on those visions to bring God’s plans to fruition. One such person is Jarena Lee, the first woman authorized to



preach in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Her legacy continues today as we see the numbers of female preachers and pastors increase throughout our Zion. In her autobiography, which is entitled, *Religious Experience and Journal of Mrs. Jarena Lee*, she acknowledged having received many visions from God. One of the most poignant visions that she reported occurred when God called her to preach. In this vision, she said she heard an internal voice saying, "Go preach my Gospel. I will put words in your mouth and will turn your enemies to become your friends."

This vision was life-changing! Her obedience opened her up to many vulnerabilities. It challenged prevailing norms as this was adverse to societal and many religious norms. She informed Bishop Allen of her calling, and although he did not initially grant her permission to preach in the AME Church, she did not relinquish her commitment to obey God's calling.

In another vision, Mrs. Lee reported that she saw herself moving toward heaven on a narrow path. She believed this symbolized the fact that she would encounter many challenges on her journey as a preacher, but she should continue steadfastly in her faith

and fulfill her calling. She obviously obeyed! Mrs. Lee is noted for having preached wherever opportunities arose, despite not being allowed to preach in churches. However, her commitment to preach and her faith was so strong that she couldn't control the Holy Spirit's urgings to preach. After she extemporaneously delivered a sermon one night to rescue a preacher who was struggling to deliver a sermon, Bishop Allen was so impressed that he accepted her

confession and allowed her to preach in the AME Church. However, he did not ordain her. Obviously, this did not deter her from her calling. She preached until her death. She was finally ordained posthumously at the 50<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Session of the AME Church's General Conference.

### CASE STUDY

All visions are not the same! Neither are they

all limited to one's spirituality. God-ordained visions have led to inventions that have significantly improved or led to quality-of-life improvements for humankind, and in some cases, lives have been saved. Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, a 34-year-old black woman, was included in an ABC News Report on December 17, 2020. She was noted as a person who "will go down in history for

**God-ordained  
visions have led to  
inventions that have  
significantly improved  
or led to quality-of-  
life improvements for  
humankind, and in  
some cases, lives have  
been saved.**

leading the effort to solve the COVID-19 pandemic.” Dr. Corbett is also reported to be a research fellow and leading scientist at the National Institute of Health.

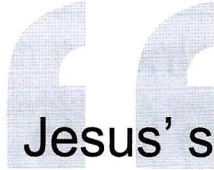
Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) and (then) chief medical advisor to the president of the United States, also commended Dr. Corbett as a scientist – primarily for her work on Moderna’s vaccine, which had a “94 to 95% efficacy against clinical disease and almost 100% against serious disease.” Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) says: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Surely, visions of a vaccine that could free the world from COVID-19’s pain, suffering, and deaths were motivations for Dr. Corbett’s extraordinary research and vaccine development. Those of us

who lived through the pandemic can testify to the positive outcomes of Dr. Corbett’s work for our families, churches, and communities.

### LIFE APPLICATION

In this lesson, obedience and sacrifice operate, thematically, like a golden thread that links the work of Jesus and John, the writer of Revelation. Our lesson is primarily focused on Jesus and his worthiness.

However, it was obedience and sacrifice on John’s part that led to his writing this letter (Revelation) to the seven churches of Asia and for Christians throughout the world’s history. It is important to remember that John was a prisoner, exiled to the Island of Patmos for teaching and witnessing about Jesus Christ. However, this imprisonment did not deter John from continuing to fulfill his calling.



Jesus' sacrifices on our behalf and his obedience to God are brightly illuminated throughout today's scriptures.

Jesus' sacrifices on our behalf and his obedience to God are brightly illuminated throughout today's scriptures. As we look closely at the heavenly scene, especially the appearance of the lamb, we see vivid reminders of Jesus' tenacity as God's servant. Persecution did not deter him from doing God's will.

This leads to our need to examine ourselves.

God has a purpose for each of our lives. To seriously pursue God's purposes, we need heavenly visions as well as the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The world says, "If you see it, you can believe it." But, Jesus says, "If you can believe it, you can see it." Which of the two are you following?

### QUESTIONS

1. Assume yourself to be John, and you are



looking at the “Lamb, who looks like he has been slain.” How would you react?

2. How would you relate the Lamb’s appearance to taunting messages Jesus endured on the cross, such as “if you are the son of God, save yourself.”
3. How will you use this lesson for your own spiritual growth and to help others?

### CLOSING DEVOTIONS

**Closing Song:** “The Lamb of God”

**Closing Prayer:** Lord, we bow humbly today, thanking you for all of your blessings and asking again for the forgiveness of our sins. Thank you for Jesus, the *Worthy Lamb*, and for John, who wrote Revelation to give us greater understanding and hope for ourselves and the future of the world. We praise you, we glorify your name, and in the name of Jesus, we pray and thank you. Amen.

### HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

April 28–May 4

<b>Monday</b>	Psalm 86:1-7, 10-17 (Answer Me, O Lord)
<b>Tuesday</b>	1 Peter 5 (Be Alert)
<b>Wednesday</b>	Lamentations 3:21-36 (The Lord Will Not Reject Forever)
<b>Thursday</b>	2 Peter 3:1-10 (God Patiently Waits for Repentance)
<b>Friday</b>	2 Peter 3:11-18 (Live the Godly Life)
<b>Saturday</b>	1 Chronicles 21:1-13 (A Presumptive King)
<b>Sunday</b>	1 Chronicles 21:14-30 (A Costly Sacrifice)