

PLACE: Lurgan Baptist 13:4:2003

Reading: Revelation 5:1-14

3. CONSIDER HIM

THE UNRIVALLED CHRIST

Have you ever wanted to ask Abraham, “ *Was it worth it to leave Ur of the Chaldees wander around Canaan, live in a tent, and in the end have nothing more to show for it than basically one son, the cave of Machpelah, and the still unfulfilled promises of God ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask Moses, “ *Was it worth it to give up the pleasures and treasures of Egypt to lead a million or more former slaves through the wilderness for forty years and never get into the promised land yourself ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask Daniel, “ *Was it worth it to pray three times a day and wind up in the lions den ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask Isaiah, “ *Was it worth it to volunteer service for God when as a result of that service you were sawn in two ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask John the Baptist, “ *Was it worth it to speak the truth to Herod’s face and lose your head ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask Peter, “ *Was it worth it to open the door for the gospel to the Gentiles, only to be crucified upside down ?*” Have you ever wanted to ask John, “ *Was it worth it to preach the gospel and plant churches all over the known world, and in the end wind up in exile on Patmos ?*” Have you ever asked yourself, “ *Is it worth it to live a life of faith in the Lord*

when no one else is ? Is it worth to me ?” Is it worth it to get out on Sunday morning, get out and meet with the Lord when you were out late on Saturday night ? Is it worth every morning to get up thirty minutes earlier in order to pray and read the Scriptures when you really want to sleep to the last minute ? Is it worth it to share the gospel with your friend, and as a result lose his friendship ? Is it worth to tell the truth when lying would get you a promotion or a salary increase ? My is it worth it to live a godly life in obedience to God’s Word ? Is it worth it ? My personal answer to all of these questions is a resounding, “ *yes, Yes ! Yes ! It is worth it. Living a godly life is worth whatever it costs. Do you know why ? Because HE is worth it !* You see, this vision of His Glory in (Ch 5) describes the “ *worth - it-ness*, or the worthiness of the Lord Jesus and gives tremendous hope to those who are discouraged, disillusioned and disheartened !

Now in the previous chapter, John was caught up into heaven where he saw the Throne of God and the Court of Heaven. In (Ch 5) the scene is still in heaven, but the theme changes. In (Ch 4) the song in heaven is all about **Creation**, while in (Ch 5) the song in heaven is all about Redemption. Up to this point there has been no sign of the Lamb, but now He becomes the centre of everything. Our Lord steps into the spotlight and fills the stage of the universe, drawing every eye and prompting endless applause. Indeed there is brought before us here “ *THE UNRIVALLED CHRIST.*” There are three pictures that I want you to notice. Picture number one is that of:

(1) UNQUALIFIED HUMANITY

A challenge is thrown out to all humanity: *Who of all God's creatures is fit to rule the world ? Who has the right to the title deed of the earth ? Who is capable of leading us toward the solutions for our problems ?* Who is smart enough ? Moral enough ? Strong enough ? Who is worthy ? The question lingers in the air of heaven like an accusation. No one steps forth. Throughout human history there have been those who considered themselves worthy to "**break the seals,**" to "**open the scroll,**" to carve out a man made Utopia on earth. But even the best and most heroic leaders in history have not proven worthy to "**break the seals,**" to "**open the scroll,**" and to bring about a world of peace. Who, then of all God's creatures is fit to rule the world ? Our attention is drawn here to

(a) THE SCROLL:

"A book," (5:1) literally it means a scroll. Now this book is held tightly by God's omnipotent fist indicating its divine source and that it is God's to give to whomever He pleases. This scroll is written on both sides front and back. Now the ancients hardly ever wrote on both sides of a scroll. Usually one side was for writing, while the back side was a rough, outer cover. Writing on both sides symbolised that message was full to overflowing, detailed, and extremely important. The mere fact that it is written down as opposed to being spoken indicates that it is unalterable, settled, and determined by God alone. In ancient times

a scroll, like a Roman will was sealed by placing a single seal on the outer edge. But this scroll has seven seals one on the outside and six more on the inside. In other words, the scroll was partially rolled and then sealed, rolled some more and then sealed, rolled again and then sealed, until the seventh seal sealed the entire scroll. *So what's in this scroll ?*

I believe this scroll, which some find so mysterious is "*the title deed to the earth.*" This is the official document that will determine the outcome of human history. In this book are the final, end-time, cataclysmic judgments of God that will be poured out upon the earth during the tribulation period. The One who possesses this book and can break its seals possesses the right to rule the world. (Jer 32:6-15) So this book in the hand of God is a document redeeming the world. It is a sealed scroll, a legal document, belonging to the one who has paid the price and therefore has the legal right to open it and reveal what is written within.

It is the title deed to the earth. (Lk 21:28 Rom 8:21) Now the very context in (Rev 5) proves this. In (5:2) the call goes forth for an applicant to come and take the scroll. John wept because no **man** was found worthy to do so. The sphere of **man** is evidently in view. Then again, when the seals on the scroll are eventually broken, disasters overtake the earth. We read (6:2) "*And he went forth conquering and to conquer.*" Where did he go forth to conquer ? The earth. (6:5 7-8 12-15) This book has something to do with the judgments of God that are yet to come on the earth. (Ezek 2:9-10 Dan 12:1-4)

My this world is spinning through space, headed toward a final, cataclysmic judgment. Have we forgotten that the wrath of God is presently boiling over and one day will be unleashed on this ungodly world ! In the end, Heaven will prove to be triumphant over the earth. This Judgment during the Tribulation is written by God in His sacred scroll, already divinely ordained and predestined to occur. And the right to rule the earth is now to be decided at the Throne of God once and for all. You see, our attention is drawn to:

(b) THE SEARCH:

A challenge is thrown out, who has the right to the title deed to the earth ? Who has paid the price to redeem it and can legally open those seals ? Who has the right in God's eyes to rule the world ? We can think of many people who have been willing. History is littered with fallen conquerors and their shattered dreams of a man made Utopia. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Germany's Hitler, who envisioned a world-wide Reich that would last a thousand years. Iraq's Saddam Hussein. I expect the presidents of the U.S.A. and the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom would be willing. But that wasn't the question. The question was, "*Who is worthy ?*" Who is worthy to rule the world ? Who is capable of solving our problems ? Who is competent to bring human history to its appointed end ? The answer is a stunning revelation of the failure of the human race. (5:3) "*Who is worthy ?*" No one in Washington has the answers. No one in Moscow. No one in London, Baghdad, Tel Aviv, or Tokyo can deliver us from our problems. No one can execute Gods plan for human history. We are hopeless and helpless to usher in the Golden Age. Our problems are beyond us. No wonder John wept. His troubled heart was filled with deep distress. Did you notice:

(c) THE SOB:

Why does John weep ? (5:4) Because he knows that this world needs redemption. The world needs a leader and the scroll must be opened and the seals broken for Gods purpose's to be fulfilled. John's tears represent the weeping of all God's people down through the centuries. These are our tears longing for God to make a disordered world right. But as the old apostle stood there with tears streaming down his lined weather beaten face one of the elders got up and said "*Weep not.*" Then in a voice that must have pulsed with the anticipation of victory he announced, "*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.*" (5:5) "*John, there is one man Who is able ! There is one man in all of the universe Who is worthy in God's eyes to rule the world. Only one ! The man Christ Jesus.*" My If the Lord Jesus is able to rule the world and He is, is He not then able to rule your life and mine ? Why is it that we settle for an unworthy lord ? We allow ourselves to be ruled by our emotions, or the opinions of others, or our business, our career, our bank account. My if God says Christ is able to fulfil His purpose for the entire human race is He not able to fulfil God's purpose for your life ? What is God's eternal solution for the world ? Well, turn from the picture of Unqualified Humanity to the second picture here.

(2) UNDISPUTED SUPREMACY

John is told not to cry, there is good news. Someone has been found who can open that scroll and read it. Someone is worthy and has paid the price to redeem the world. You see,

the only solution that exists to the human dilemma is our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice, that John's attention is drawn to:

(a) THE PERSON OF OUR LORD:

" Behold the lion " (5:5) This is the **MAJESTY of the Lord Jesus:** Like a lion Ferocious, courageous, fearless, kingly, mighty. majestic. This Lion of Judah is Jesus Christ. For He alone is able to break the seals, open the scroll and execute its events. *" Of the tribe of Judah,"* This is the **ROYALTY of the Lord Jesus:** the tribe of Judah was the tribe of David from which the kingly line proceeded. (Gen 49:9-10) It was to this tribe that the promise was given of a Son whose throne and kingdom would endure forever. (2 Sam 7:13-16) *" The root of David "* This is the **ETERNALITY of the Lord Jesus:** For He who came after David as the offspring of David was also before David as the root.

(22:16) This points to Christ's eternal pre-existence.

" Hath prevailed " This is **THE VICTORY OF THE LORD JESUS:** For this regal Lion eternal, divine, yet completely human won the victory at Calvary in order to open this scroll.

(b) THE POSITION OF OUR LORD:

How could John have ever missed Him ? There He was, in the midst all the time. (5:6) Perhaps John had been so taken up with the sights and sounds of glory, so occupied with the eternal throne, the emerald rainbow and so on, that he had completely missed the Lamb ! Yet the Lamb was in the midst of it all. (Matt 18:20) My do we not do the same ? We come and go to meetings, listen to the most stirring messages, read

the most profound passages from God's Word, sing the most sublime hymns and yet we miss the Lord in the midst.

(c) THE PASSION OF OUR LORD:

He turns to see a **LION**, but instead he sees a **LAMB**. John must have wondered, *" This is the solution to the world's problems ? A lowly lamb ? A weak, submissive lamb. "* Precisely. The answer to man's problems is the Lamb of God Jesus Christ. The Lion-Lamb. The Sovereign Saviour. What a combination of meekness and majesty. Now there are two very interesting words here. The first is *" Lamb. "* In Greek there are two words for Lamb. One describes a lamb in general.

(amnos) The other means a pet lamb. (arnion) Satan is described as a dragon (12:9) with his hordes of mighty demons supporting him, but God is so powerful that all he requires to defeat Satan is a little pet lamb.

The second interesting word here is *" slain. "*

(sphazo) *" It means to cut up and mutilate an animal sacrifice. It describes the gory crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. Thorns pierced His skull. A whip lacerated His back. Fists bruised His face. Nails gouged His hands. A spear tore His side. Blood and water came gushing out. "* And now in Heaven the marks of our Lord's death are still there, imprinted in His resurrected body for all eternity. A Sunday School teacher who taught young boys one asked her class, *" Is there anything manmade in heaven ? "* To her surprise one of the boys spoke up and said, *" Yes Ma'am there is. "* *" What could there possibly be in heaven that is manmade ? "* she asked. *" The nail prints in the Saviour's hands. "* My what Thomas saw in the Upper Room, what John looked

upon in Heaven, we too shall see in glory for Heaven can never forget the sufferings of the Cross. "*I shall know Him, I shall know Him, by the print of the nails in His hand.*" But John discovers even something more strange. For this Lamb, who was violently slaughtered and put to death, is actually **Standing**. Having being killed, He is now alive **Again**.

(d) THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR LORD:

Christ died with all the vestures of defeat. A cross. A crown of thorns. A jeering mob. A black sky. An agonising cry. But then came Sunday morning and with it the glorious report, "*He is not here, but is RISEN.*" (Lk 24:6) "*The head that once was crowned with crowns is crowned with glory now.*" John sees something else. "*A Lamb having seven horns.*" (5:6) That's:

(e) THE POWER OF OUR LORD:

In the Bible, an animals horns speak of its power to ram, butt, gore and defeat its enemies and seven is the number of perfection. Sevens horns means **Omnipotence**. The Lord Jesus will have no trouble opening the scroll and executing the seven seal judgments: (6:1 - 8:5) the seven trumpet judgments: (8:6 - 19:21) and the seven vial judgments: (16:1 - 19:21) for He is the omnipotent God. John noted something else, "*A Lamb having seven eyes.*" (5:6) Is that not ?

(f) THE PERCEPTION OF OUR LORD:

Gods Lamb is omniscient. Full of intelligence. Possessing

perfect discernment. He has perfect knowledge of all things past, present, and future. This is one Lamb who can't have the wool pulled over His eyes. (Is: 11:2-4) Now look at what happens in this dramatic moment in Heaven. The Lamb came "*and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.*" (5:7) You see that's:

(g) THE PREROGATIVES OF OUR LORD:

Suppose for a moment the question had been asked Christ, "*What is the basis of Your claim to the title deed of earth ?*" His reply could have been threefold. He could have said, "*That world is mine by right of Creation, for I made it, it is mine of by right of Calvary, for I redeemed it, it is mine by Right of Conquest, for I am going back to claim that world in war.*" As Christ steps into the spotlight His right is instantly owned. Now from the moment the Lamb is put into the picture, John cannot take his eyes off Him. He mentions Him again and again in this chapter. (5:6,8,12,13) He is the centrepiece of Heaven. "*The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land.*"

Undisputed Supremacy ! Is Christ the centrepiece of your life ? Does everything in your life revolve around Him ? He created you, He bought you at Calvary with precious blood, and He is the **only one** who has the right to rule your life ! Would you yield the reins of your life to Him ? Will you allow Him to rule and reign as Undisputed Sovereign in your life ? Will you crown Him Lord of all ? I said there were three pictures here. Picture number 1: Unqualified Humanity ! Picture number 2: Undisputed Supremacy ! Picture 3:

(3) UNEQUALLED MELODY

For as the Lamb takes the book, all heaven erupts in worship. To worship means “ *to ascribe worth,*” and Christ alone is worthy. My here is worship as it was meant to be, alive, dynamic, genuine, passionate. Did you notice:

(a) THE SOURCE OF THIS WORSHIP:

For it comes from all directions and includes every creature. What we have in here are expanding circles of His worshippers. Notice first the Lord Jesus is immediately worshipped by those ***around*** the throne. The four beasts and the twenty four elders representative of the church. (5:8-10) Then Christ is worshipped throughout ***all Heaven.*** (5:11-12) Finally, He is worshipped throughout ***All the universe.*** (5:13-14) The creatures at the throne worship Him. The countless angel throng worship Him. The whole universe worship Him. (Phil 2:9-11) Because He is Worthy to be Worshipped ! Did you notice this worship was ***JOYFUL ?*** The elders each had a harp. When Israel came under the judgement of God and was carried off into captivity, she hung up her harp. (Ps 137:1) She had no song. She was living outside the will of God and she had lost her joy. When did you hang up your harp ?

My When you resist God’s will for your life and insist on your own way, you can lose your joy. Did you notice this worship was ***HOPEFUL ?*** “ *They sung a new song,*” it was about Christ’s rightful claim to rule the world because He alone is worthy. Did you notice this worship was ***THANKFUL ?*** For memories of Calvary are precious in heaven. Indeed,

(b) THE SUBJECT OF THIS WORSHIP:

Is Christ ! In (5:9) the elders ***Sing:*** in (5:12) the angels ***Say,*** but their theme is similar. “ ***Worthy is the Lamb.***” (5:12) Isaac once asked: “ ***Where is the Lamb ?***” (Gen 22:7) John the Baptist then answered: “ ***Behold the Lamb.***” (Jn 1:29) All creation now says, “ ***Worthy is the Lamb.***” (5:12) There are some denominations who have gone through their hymnals and taken out all the songs about the blood of Christ. But the reason He is worthy is because of Calvary. In (Ch 4) the theme was, “ ***Thou art worthy for Thou hast created.***” (4:11) But now the worship is lifted an octave higher. “ ***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 kindred, and tongue, and people and nation and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.***” (5:9-10)

Sir Robert Anderson says: “ ***Eternity in the PAST knew no other future than Calvary’s Cross: eternity in the future will know no other PAST than Calvary’s Cross.***” In that bright scene of splendour, far beyond the skies, they worship Him. They worship Him as the Lamb that was slain. Its Calvary that fills their vision and prompts their worship. Over yonder at this moment they are doing what we do when we worship Him when we spread the Table and remember Him. Christ is the centrepiece of Heaven. All heaven revolves around Him. Over yonder at this very moment they are worshipping Him now. They are crying, “ ***Worthy is the Lamb.***” And what a day it will be when the church is taken home and all heaven breaks loose in worship of the Lamb. “ ***Consider Him,***” ***The Undaunted Christ,*** “

Consider Him," The Unveiled Christ," " Consider Him,"
The Unrecognised Christ," " Consider Him," The
Unrivalled Christ. We exalt Him. We adore Him. We worship
Him. We love Him. We want no other. We desire no other. We
will have no other. We will seek no other. We will love no
other.
" Worthy is the Lamb."

*" Oh, that with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet may fall,
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all."*