

We must remember that Revelation 4:1–8:1 is all one section of 'the Revelation' being given to John. Now John takes a closer look at God, the One who sits on the throne.

<sup>1</sup>*Then I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a scroll with writing on the inside and on the outside. It was locked up with seven seals.* The remainder of our vision<sup>□1</sup> has to do with this scroll and these seals. They are a symbolic way of speaking of the future plans and purposes of God. God has purposes to give his people an inheritance. He has not abandoned his creation and his purposes for his people. They are settled in God's mind. It is as if they are written down ready for him to bring them to pass. But God's purposes are locked up in a sealed scroll. No one knows what they are.

□1 5:1-8:1

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1. The question is: who is able to bring about God's plans and purposes?

**1. The question is: who is able to bring about God's plans and purposes?** Even the angels (in John's vision) ask that question. <sup>2</sup>*I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open this book, and to break open its seal?'* The question means: who is there who can carry forward the purposes of God for his people? At first there is no one. <sup>3</sup>*And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth was able to open the book, or look at what was inside.* No one can step forward and say, 'I can do it!' Every human being is weak. Even the people of God are not strong enough in themselves to carry forward God's plan. No one has the ability even to understand it.

• No human being worthy to open the scroll – John weeps

John weeps. <sup>4</sup>*And I was weeping bitterly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or look at what was inside.* If no one can fulfil God's purposes, there will be no salvation, no inheritance for God's people, no protection amidst persecution. There will be only endless chaos and wickedness. John weeps at the thought of it.

2. There is one person who is able to carry forward the purposes of God: our Lord Jesus Christ

**2. There is one person who is able to carry forward the purposes of God: our Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>5</sup>*Then one of the elders says to me, 'Don't weep! Look, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Branch coming from David's line, has won the victory. He is able to open the book and its seven seals.'* He is 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah', the predicted king of Genesis 49, who has the sovereignty and the power to overcome all enemies, like a mighty lion. He is 'the Branch coming from David's line'. The picture comes from Isaiah 11:1, 10, where we have a tree that has been chopped down. The tree seems to be dead, but actually it is still alive, and out of the remains of the tree there comes a small twig that will grow into a branch. The tree is the line of David. The twig is Jesus, the descendant of David the king. In Isaiah 11:10 the 'Root of David' gathers to himself the nations.

• The Lion of the tribe of Judah – the branch spoken of by Isaiah – He is worthy

So John looks at the one that has been mentioned by the elder. <sup>6</sup>*Then I saw a Lamb standing between the throne and the four living beings, and among the elders. It looked as if it had been slaughtered. It had seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the*

• *Jesus is also the Lamb who has conquered because the price of the punishment for sin has been paid*

• *Jesus shares the Father's authority*

• *Jesus is the Lord of history*

seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth. The seven horns speak of the Lamb's power. The eyes speak of the Lamb's knowledge. 'The Lamb' is of course our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who was slaughtered by men and by God as the sacrifice for the sins of the world. The Lamb has conquered because the price of the punishment for sin has been paid.

The Lamb comes near to the throne. <sup>7</sup>And he came, and he took the book out of the right hand of the One that was sitting on the throne. Something happens in which the Lamb is given the authority to be the One who achieves all of the Father's will, the One who will execute all of the Father's plans and purposes. By dying on the cross Jesus won the victory over all that was opposed to God. It was because of the obedience of the cross that he was highly exalted and given a name that is above every name<sup>1</sup>. From now on the Lamb shares the Father's authority. He 'takes the book'. That is, he takes the right to receive the honour and glory that is to be given him by his becoming the Father's 'right-hand Man'. He takes upon himself the work of fulfilling the remainder of the Father's plans.

Jesus is the Lord of history. By his death upon the cross, the man, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the flesh, has been exalted to be the King of the universe. He has taken upon himself the work of bringing the church to glory, protecting his people amidst the many tribulations through which they will have to travel. He is the One who will bring them to glory.

3. **Jesus is both a Lion and a Lamb!** He is a Lion in his power. He is a Lamb in his sufferings. God governs the universe through a Lion who roars against the sins of the world. God governs the universe through a Lamb who laid his life down as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. A major stage in the achievement of God's purposes has already taken place. The Lion-Lamb had already achieved a victory over sin and death and Satan. Now he rules to achieve the remainder of the purposes of God.

**3. Jesus is both a Lion and a Lamb!**

• *A Lion in His power*

• *A Lamb in His sufferings*

<sup>1</sup> see Philippians 2:9-11

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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