

Revelation 5:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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 kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Analysis

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This verse from Revelation's vision of the lamb who is worthy - Christ's redemptive work, authority to open the scroll employs apocalyptic imagery rich with Old Testament allusions and symbolic meaning. The Greek text uses vivid apocalyptic language characteristic of Jewish prophetic literature, drawing heavily from Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Zechariah.

The symbolism must be interpreted within its first-century context while recognizing timeless spiritual realities. The imagery would resonate powerfully with persecuted believers facing Roman imperial cult worship, providing hope that despite present suffering, Christ reigns sovereign and will consummate His kingdom. The apocalyptic genre uses symbolic numbers (seven, twelve, 144,000), colors, beasts, and cosmic imagery to convey theological truth rather than photographic descriptions.

Christologically, Revelation consistently exalts Jesus as the victorious Lamb, the faithful witness, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Every vision ultimately points to Christ's supremacy, His finished redemptive work, and His certain return to judge the living and dead and establish the new creation.

Historical Context

John received this revelation circa AD 95 during Domitian's persecution, exiled on Patmos for his testimony. The seven churches of Asia Minor faced increasing pressure to participate in emperor worship and pagan religious practices. Refusal meant economic hardship, social ostracism, and potential martyrdom. Understanding this context illuminates Revelation's encouragement to faithful endurance.

The apocalyptic genre was familiar to first-century Jewish and Christian readers. Rather than newspaper-style predictions, apocalyptic literature uses symbolic imagery to reveal spiritual realities behind earthly events, encourage the faithful, warn the unfaithful, and assert God's ultimate sovereignty over history. Parallels with Daniel, Ezekiel, and intertestamental apocalyptic writings would help original readers decode the symbols.

Rome's imperial cult demanded worship of Caesar as divine, placing Christians in impossible situations—compromise their faith or face persecution. Revelation identifies Rome as "Babylon" and assures believers that despite appearances, the Lamb conquered through His death and resurrection, and all earthly kingdoms will submit to His reign.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Revelation 5:9 reveal God's character, particularly His sovereignty, holiness, and justice?
2. What specific encouragement or warning does this verse offer for maintaining faithful Christian witness amid cultural pressure?

3. How does this passage point to Christ's victory and the hope of new creation, and how should that shape your present priorities?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἀδούσιν	ῳδὴν	καινὴν	λέγοντες	Ἄξιος	εἰ	λαβεῖν	
And	they sung	song	a new	saying	worthy	Thou art	to take	
G2532	G103	G5603	G2537	G3004	G514	G1488	G2983	
τὸ	βιβλίον	καὶ	ἀνοίξαι	τὰς	σφραγῖδας	αὐτοῦ	ὅτι	
G3588	the book	And	to open	G3588	the seals	thereof	for	
	G975	G2532	G455		G4973	G846	G3754	
ἐσφάγης	καὶ	ἡγόρασας	τῷ	θεῷ	ἡμᾶς	ἐν	τῷ	αἷματί
thou wast slain	And	hast redeemed	G3588	to God	us	by	G3588	blood
G4969	G2532	G59		G2316	G2248	G1722		G129
σου	ἐκ	πάσης	φυλῆς	καὶ	γλώσσης	καὶ	λαοῦ	καὶ
thy	out of	every	kindred	And	tongue	And	people	And
G4675	G1537	G3956	G5443	G2532	G1100	G2532	G2992	G2532
ἔθνους								
	nation							
	G1484							

Additional Cross-References

1 John 1:7 (Blood): But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleaneth us from all sin.

Matthew 26:28 (Blood): For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Psalms 40:3 (References God): And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Revelation 14:6 (Parallel theme): And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

1 Corinthians 6:20 (References God): For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Revelation 5:12 (Parallel theme): Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Revelation 4:11 (Parallel theme): Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Acts 20:28 (Blood): Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Revelation 5:6 (References God): 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.

Matthew 20:28 (Redemption): Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.