

The Worship of the Lamb

Revelations 5

Introduction

Good evening brothers and sisters in Christ welcome back to another session of Gamma 16 and today we will be carrying on with Revelations 5 which actually comes together as a package with last weeks lesson on Revelations 4 where we zoomed in on the control tower or the cockpit , the control center of the whole universe. Right in the heart of the universe from which all life and creation flows is the throne of God and John witnessed the magnificence and glory of who God is and why He is worshipped because everything owes its origin and life to this God.

Today we come to Revelations 5 and we come to the worship of the Son of God portrayed as both the Lion of Judah and the Lamb that was slain and His role in our salvation.

If you were to look at this scheme of how Revelations is structured. In the first 5 lessons we have seen how the seven churches are admonished and encouraged during difficult times to endure and keep the faith as they all faced difficult times. In Revelations 4-5 we see how they can endure and overcome because the one that have sovereign control over the universe, over the course of history and the real power behind the throne is actually God.

You don't see His hand as it is blurred by the political power and might of Rome,

You don't feel his love and care as one trial after another smashes us from right to left.

You are not confident that He is there or that He actually understands or has any control in a world where anarchy ,chaos, injustice and treachery is the norm.

Revelations 4-5 precedes the Seals, Trumpets and Bowls of judgement as well as the conflict between Satan and the church in Revelations 6-19 simply because John is unveiling to us the God's eye view of the universe. Nothing is beyond His control. Nothing escapes His purposes and Nothing will happen unless He wills it. John is showing that the whirlwind of pain and suffering is both judgement for unbelievers and purification for believers and that the believers are already sealed and protected because Revelations 5 shows us that the Lamb has already won the decisive victory and the end of history is already in sight. So when we next read the rest of the book of Revelations we must read it with Revelations 4-5 as its back ground the back ground for all eternity.

The Scroll

Revelation 5:1 (ESV) Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

The next vision that comes up is indicated when John relates " *then I saw in the right hand of Him who sits on the throne*". The vision of John is of a real place there is both auditory and visual sense given to him. Heaven is not an imaginary place. Sure there are lots of symbols but that does not mean there is no real place. In fact it was Jesus who reassured his disciples in John 14 that he goes to prepare a place for his disciples ..

John 14:2 (ESV) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

Everything that is important to us as disciples is in heaven.

The first thing John notices is the scroll in the right hand of God

There is something unusual about this scroll as John takes time to describe it as there was writing on the front and back of the scroll. This is unusual because papyrus scrolls are made of strips of the reeds that are glued together to make up the scroll. On the front is the horizontal strips and on the back is the vertical strips of reeds and they are glued together. Therefore one would usually write on the front from right to left for Greek and left to right in Hebrew because it is in the direction of the horizontal strips. One would not normally write on the back of the scroll as your pen would be writing across all the bumps made by the vertical strips of reed at the back unless one was using Mandarin which writes in an up to down fashion instead of left to right.

There were only two instances where one would write on both front and back which would be if one was very poor and could not afford to write just on the front or if it was a legal document which was a will or a title deed to a property or a prophetic document because one would want to get all the details of the assets on one papyrus. Hence this scroll is a legal document because it is not possible to say God was too poor and stingy and had to write on both sides. It was a legal document.

Here is an example of a prophetic document by *Ezekiel 2: 9 And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out to me, and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. 10 And he spread it before me. And it had writing on the front and on the back, and there were written on it words of lamentation and mourning and woe.*

This is an example of the last will and testament of Emperor Vespasian and this document had 7 seals just as the one described in this chapter. The seals were used to authenticate the document and ensure they were not tampered with.

Here is an example of the title deed with multiple seals and if we look at Jeremiah 32 we can see how it works. Jeremiah was asked by God to buy property from his cousin Hanamel during the siege of Jerusalem which was a really crazy proposition as property prices would soon plunge to nothing as Jerusalem was on the verge of falling. Nevertheless God asked him to buy it in anticipation of the return from exile where his people would need land to settle in again 70 years later on.

Jeremiah 32: 8 Then Hanamel my cousin came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

Jeremiah 32: 14 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware vessel, that they may last for a long time

There was an open copy for all to read and a sealed copy to be stored in an earthen pot for next time when his relatives were to come back to Jerusalem they would retrieve the title deed in break the seals and enact the contents of the deed they would use the title deed to reclaim the land.

This scroll in heaven was very important because
It comes from the right hand of God so obviously it was of utmost important to God
There was great anguish when no one could open the scroll

Revelations 5: 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 loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it

Now why was there such pain in the whole of heaven that no one could break the seals and enact the contents of the scroll?

You see in ancient title deeds there were three criteria for redeeming the property by enacting the contents of the title deed.

Firstly you have to be related as all land was locked in to their particular families in the 12 tribes of Israel and you could not sell the land to outsiders. Only a relative could redeem the land.

Secondly one must be willing to undertake to redeem the land and

Thirdly, one must be able to redeem as not everyone who wanted the land would be able to pay the price for the land.

So this all important scroll from the right hand of God must be God's plan of judgement, blessing and redemption for the world. The opening of the seals will set into motion the rest of world history and trigger the cascade of events of Revelations 6-22 till we reach eternity. That is why John is weeping loudly because unless the seals are open then God's purposes for redemption and judgement for all man kind will not come to pass

In fact John's anguish and tears represent the tears of Adam and Eve when they first encounter the lifeless body of their child Abel, it is the tears of the children of Israel in bondage in Egypt. It is the tears of the children of God in exile in Babylon. It is all our collective tears in the midst of our misery and hopelessness when we experience injustice, violence and pain in our world. The tears represent our cry to God how long? How long , why don't you answer our pain?

The only One who can open the scroll

Then the answer comes

Revelations 5: 5 And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

It is the **Lion of Judah** and the Lamb which has its Old Testament background

*Genesis 49:9-10 (ESV) Judah is a lion's cub;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.*

*He stooped down; he crouched as a lion
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?*

*10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
until tribute comes to him;
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.*

This is the prophecy that the Messiah shall come from the tribe of Judah because it is written "*The scepter shall not depart from Judah,*"
The scepter is the symbol of a King's power and authority and this confirmed by
and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples

Then there is the other Old testament prophecy

*Isaiah 11:1-2 (ESV) There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,*

Jesse is the father of David and the Messiah comes from the lineage of David where it was promised to him by God that there will be an eternal Davidic king one day.

Hence Jesus is that Davidic King, Jesus is that Lion of Judah ..he fits the lineage and the prophecy directly . He has total eternal legitimacy

The Lamb

The second way in which Jesus is described is the Lamb and in fact the Lamb is mentioned 29 times in the book of Revelations.

The horns are symbolic for strength and authority over others and if there are 7 horns means the Lamb has complete authority over everything and is omnipotent. As in the description of the 4 living creatures who were full of eyes here the Lamb has 7 eyes which means he has complete knowledge , wisdom and understanding ..omniscience and complete measure of the Spirit as symbolised by the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The unusual thing about the Lamb is that it was slaughtered , the word is meant to convey the horror of a violent death.

So here we have a distinctive of apocalyptic prophecy the use of mixed metaphors, the Lion of Judah and the Lamb that was slain which is the Bible's way of saying several things at the same time. God is showing us that Jesus has both the power and authority to be the ruler of the eternal kingdom and yet was the one who was slaughtered as the sacrificial lamb for mankind.

Why was Jesus the only one in the universe who could open the scroll and seven seals ?

Revelation 5:5-7 (ESV) And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

Jesus has conquered , and how has he conquered? , as the Lamb who had been slain which refers to the crucifixion , the sacrifice for our sins.

Remember the three criteria that qualifies the person to redeem the title deed to the land

He must be related. If you would remember the prophecy of Daniel 7 in the last days there will be one "like the son of man" which means human a person sharing our nature as humans related to us.

*Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV) I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
14 And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;*

In Revelation 1:12-13 (ESV) Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

Jesus is described as "one like the son of man"

The next criteria would be that the Redeemer must be willing and Jesus said in John *John 10:11 (ESV) I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Jesus lays down His life voluntarily

Lastly the Redeemer must be able to pay the price

The better translation from the NIV in verse 6 is "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the 4 living creatures and the elders

To come from the center of the throne means he has the status equal to that of the one on the throne God Himself.

John expresses this in the same way in the gospel

John 1:1-3 (ESV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3

Jesus fulfilled all the criteria and He is the only one in the whole universe that is able to take the scroll because He paid the price..the Lamb who was slain not just an ordinary Lamb the Word of God

Why does God have to redeem creation back? Isn't He seated on the throne and has authority over all ?

Yes He is the Creator but the entrance of sin into the world has alienated both the people and creation from Him. The whole creation is described by Paul as groaning being subject to this curse

In 2 Cor 4: 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

In Matthew 4 when Jesus is tempted by Satan, and Satan offers him all the kingdoms of the world.

Matthew 4:8-9 (ESV) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

Jesus does not contradict him.

Once the Lamb is slain, the price for the redemption of sinful men has been paid and only when this is paid can the scroll be open, the seals split and God's final plan for the judgement of evil and salvation of the elect be finally executed. So the scroll is the title deed to the earth.

The Reaction to the taking of the scroll

Revelation 5:8 (ESV) And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Each one is holding a harp, now the harp in ancient music is not the sedate looking stringed instrument which gives out soothing music. The harp refers to a loud rowdy instrument that expresses a great deal of joy. The closest equivalent is the modern electric guitar or banjo where one plays loudly with a good beat to dance to.

The elders have golden bowls of incense. In those days people did not bathe as much as we do today and people did not use deodorants nor even talcum powder. They regularly used incense which is like the perfume Chanel equivalent. In the Old Testament incense represented the prayers of the saints

Psalms 141:2 (ESV) Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

So once the scroll was taken by the Lamb there is great outpouring of joy and guitar playing and the bowls of incense ..prayers can now be offered as they are placed before the Lamb. If the Lamb was not slain and had not conquered then our prayer could not be answered because on what conceivable ground could He have answered us. God would owe us nothing but condemnation. How could His purposes to bless us come to pass. Now the price is paid God would be able to enjoy our prayers and respond to them . So now that the Lamb has conquered then only then can prayers be brought into the presence of God so God would enjoy them like incense and answer our prayers and hopes and dry our tears

The New Song

The joy of all around the throne would be expressed in a new song

*Revelation 5:9-10 (ESV) And they sang a new song, saying,
"Worthy are you to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation,
10 and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth."*

It is a new song as the song in Revelations 4 is praise to God for creation and in Revelatons 5 it is a song praising God for redemption

We learn 4 things from the song which is about the nature of the Atonement of the Lamb

1. It is a bloody atonement
2. It is a broad atonement
3. It is a directed atonement
4. It is triumphant atonement

1. It is a bloody atonement

The lamb is *“slain”* better translated slaughtered indicating a violent death and by *“blood”* Blood signifies life as in Genesis 9 the prohibition of eating blood is that it symbolises life *Genesis 9:4 (ESV) But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.*

The blood for redemption symbolises a life violently taken ...blood spilt emphasising the costly nature of our redemption. If the picture of the Lamb that is violent slaughtered upsets our usual sensitivities it is supposed to because it points us towards the awfulness of our sin

2. It is a broad atonement

The bloody atonement of Christ redeems people *“from every tribe and language and people and nation”*

It is a redemption without distinction but not a redemption without exception which means not everyone is redeemed but the redeemed comes from every ethnic group which is why Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28 to make disciples of all nations

In every city, every nation there are people who God has chosen and who will respond to the news of this atonement.

In Acts 18 Paul is told by God despite the persecution to remain in Corinth to preach the gospel because there are many in the city who belong to Him who will respond to the gospel

Acts 18:9-11 (ESV) And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.”

John Richard Hershey is a well known journalist and author famous for his book on the aftermath of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima which was regarded as one of the finest pieces of American journalism of the 20th century.

He was the son of missionaries to China and himself was born in Tientsin in China and when the communists took over China he believed that Christianity was dead because most of it was introduced by foreigners often using military force and had to be sustained by large foreign missionary establishments and seemed to mostly attract “rice Christians” ...believers drawn to the church because of the food, medicine and education the missions provided rather than genuine conversions. Christianity was also hated by the Communist rulers and ruthlessly repressed for 30 years starting in 1949

When his parents died he returned to bury them in the 1980's in the Christian cemetery in Shanghai it had already been replaced by an apartment block and he then published his memoirs of his missionary parents and concluded that "it was all for nothing"

A few years after this memoir was published in the early 1990's a great revival swept through China despite all the persecution and today there are over 100 million believers in China more than the membership of the Chinese Communist Party which is now prompting another round of persecution.

You see obviously God has His people in China, John Hershey could not see it? The Communists could not see it. John could see it thousands of years before because in heaven the 24 elders were already singing that the people of God were ransomed from every tribe, language and nation and this was God's time for China.

Here is a picture of the Sanjiang church in Wenzhou in 2014 as the Communists are at it again, they just don't get it.

There was a group Chinese leaders under persecution who spoke to Ps Joseph Stowell who did a series on the 7 churches of revelations and their prayer requests was amazingly not for the persecution to be lifted but for endurance and faith because again they sense this is God's time for China where He is gathering His people.

The Atonement is effective and God has many of His people in every nation and the church's mandate is to share that gospel, the gospel of the Lamb that was slain for them

3. It is a directed atonement

Note the verse says "*your blood you ransomed people for God*"

There was a famous novel that is representative of the way people think nowadays. It is Eat Pray Love by Elizabeth Gilbert who travelled the world to find personal happiness. It was a journey of self discovery and she engaged in eating, praying and loving and her journey to self discovery resulted in her divorcing her husband and since then falling in love with another woman in a homosexual relationship. The novel obviously has resonated with people so much so that they made a movie of it recently with Julia Roberts as its main star. Hence we now live in a society that is increasingly looking to self fulfilment. Search for the real me doing what feels right for me. This kind of thinking also inevitably seeps into the church where our gospel has been increasingly transformed into a gospel of self fulfilment where the main goal is individual happiness and self fulfilment and people come to church to look for this.

Look at how we have cast the gospel in the past.

We show them a chart and on one side is our sin and eternal death and on the other side of the divide is heaven and eternal life and bridging the gap is Jesus Christ.

What about the two key questions of the famous Evangelism Explosion program

1. Have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you can say you know for certain that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?
2. Suppose that you were to die today and stand before God and he were to say to you, "Why should I let you into my heaven?" what would you say

The whole issue is that we should get into heaven and Jesus becomes the means to that end. This is why you will often hear people say that “ I have received Jesus as my personal Lord and Saviour”

It is individualistic and Christ is the means not the goal

It empowers egocentric goals in life ..we can be anything we want to be and Jesus will get us there . After the initial conversion experience there is little mention of sin and repentance anymore because we want to focus on positive things, confess positive things and people are not taught to admit weakness and failure and pain are not part of the process because it is not fulfilling .

The atonement by the lamb was to redeem a people –to God where knowing and enjoying and glorifying God is the goal not a means to a goal of our own self fulfilment

I remember going on a trip to the South Island of New Zealand some years ago with my family. We came across the famous Franz Josef glacier which was one of the main attractions of South Island. Like most Chinese tourists we thought the main point was to get to the top of the glacier on the mountain. Lo and behold they provided a helicopter ride to the top which we actually took and had all our photos there. On the way up we looked down and saw a whole bunch of folk actually trekking up the glacier. At the time I remember thinking to myself that it’s a lot better and more efficient taking the helicopter as those people would take hours and hours . Those miserable people were taking forever to climb up the glacier to the top. If you were to ask me now almost 20 years later on, I remember very little of the trip and even less of our time on the top it was like taking an elevator. A few years ago I have since met other tourists who have made the trip not by taking the helicopter but by actually climbing the glacier all the way to the top and their experience is completely different and entirely memorable whilst mine was a distant memory. The difference was because the ultimate purpose was to experience the conquest of the glacier, the process was the whole point not the top of the mountain but the journey to the top through the difficult crevasses ,the slight danger of slipping , the camaraderie of the people climbing with you. That was why they remembered it so fondly and I have only fleeting snatches of memory about the glacier.

We are redeemed to be a people for God and the whole point is the process of becoming a people for God.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

We are redeemed as a people for God and this involves a process where we keep our eyes on God where we are excited, enthralled and in the process become more and more like Him and this is done by His Spirit. It is a process, it is like climbing up the glacier, foot by foot a gradual process and in the process we are transformed

4. It is triumphant atonement

and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.”

The atonement make us a people for God and we are to be a kingdom, a people, priests. We are described not as individuals but our destiny is to be a people Gods own people a kingdom where God's Spirit rules in our hearts and priests

NT Wright describes a situation when he was a child and sick in bed. His mother used to keep the door to his bed room slightly ajar and placed a mirror at the side of the door. When he looked at the mirror he could see his mother in the kitchen working and feel reassured that she was still in the house and he was never alone. On the other hand with the same mirror his mother could see NT Wright in bed because of the way the mirror was angled at the edge of the door so she could feel reassured that her child was alright.

This is the best description of us as priests.

God has put us as His people His priests like angled mirrors in the world . As mirrors we reflect God to world and world to God. Our God can project His love, care to the world through us so that the rest of the world can praise the Creator when they can see His hands through our lives. Every time we look after creation and bring God's restorative healing and justice to creation we are reflecting God to the world. On the other hand we represent the world to God when we present to God the praise and the worship of the world to God. As priests we reflect the needs, worries and requests of the world to God in intercession for the people we love. What we do in part now we shall do fully in new heavens and new earth

This is not a future calling it is a current reality which we must recognise and exercise our authority as we are God's kingdom we have His authority even though the world cannot see it but we must believe it an act on it because in heaven it is celebrated as a reality.

Pastor Wan Yi of the Early Rain Covenant Church in China was arrested and sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment for preaching the gospel. Instead of cowering in fear or recriminations in bitterness look at how he sees his situation where he is torn from his family.

Look at what he wrote just before he was imprisoned

"If this regime is one day overthrown by God, it will be for no other reason than God's righteous punishment and revenge for this evil. For on earth, there has only ever been a thousand-year church. There has never been a thousand-year government. There is only eternal faith. There is no eternal power.

He is not intimidated by the might of the communist government as he recognises how short lived their power is. No government has lasted a 1000 years but the church has for more than 2000 years. He continues..

Those who lock me up will one day be locked up by angels. Those who interrogate me will finally be questioned and judged by Christ. When I think of this, the Lord fills me with a natural compassion and grief toward those who are attempting to and actively imprisoning me. Pray that the Lord would use me, that he would grant me patience and wisdom, that I might take the gospel to them."

This was the very attitude of Jesus in John 19 when Pilate warned him that he had the authority to crucify Jesus or release Him but look at Jesus reply
John 19: 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above"

There will be ultimately a Righteous Judge and it is not the communists and inevitably they will one day be in the dock and judged by Christ for all eternity. It is such a terrifying reality that not only fills him with boldness as he is no longer cowed by earthly powers but calmed by divine assurance and instead filled with compassion for his captors
That is the behaviour of a man who has experienced the visions of John and understood that is part of *"the kingdom and priests to our God who shall reign on earth"*

The final worship of heaven

So imagine the scene in heaven, there is the scroll in the right hand of God, there is the cry of the angel on who can take up the scroll and there is silence, there is anguish and tears by John and the Lamb comes from the center of the throne and takes the scroll and the 24 elders call on their knees and there is worship music of great joy which just spontaneously breaks out with incense, the prayers of the saints finally released. Prayer like all the Psalms
Psalm 54 1 O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might.

2 O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth

All the prayers of the Old Testament saints are all answered in anticipation of the sacrifice of the Lamb. The 24 Elders break out on a new song celebrating redemption of the church...then imagine everyone in heaven, the angels, the 4 living creatures and thousands and thousands of angels join in the song. It's like an orchestra from the sound of a tiny flute to a section and then the whole orchestra joins in imagine thousands and thousands all singing with a loud voice

*12 "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!"*

Then the choir expands beyond the confines of heaven and the song spills out into all of the earth and under the earth into the sea.. A vision of every creature in heaven and earth singing

...

*13 "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*

Then all of the sudden the song is over, there is stunning silence and ...

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!"

and the elders fell down and worshiped.

This scene in heaven is the out-bursting of joy which was preceded by the tears because at first no one could open the scroll. The vision is designed to evoke a sense of tension which mirrors the tension we find in our world.

Paul describes this heavenly tension in Romans 8 as the whole of creation being subject to corruption and groaning like a woman in labour and eagerly longing for resolution to be free or free again to be what God had created the universe to be.

We see that in the struggle in nature replayed every year...I remember the terrible devastation of last years Australian bush fires and the millions of acres burnt to a crisp and billions of animals incinerated in the flames and yet a year on new shoots are seen coming out and so it is destruction and restoration in a deadly cycle year after year but each time there is less and less growing back. All we can do is to store seeds but this is the deadly struggle this is nature , this is creation groaning and looking forward to the day when the sons of God will be revealed...that is us the whole of creation is longing wating for us to be glorified in the new heavens and new earth and that is now possible because the Lamb who was slain has taken the scroll and opened it up. The end is finally in sight and the whole heaven sings and sings and sings.

So in the ensuing weeks when the tribulations of the horsemen, trumpets and bowls are poured out. It is ultimately this scene of celebration and victory that must be utmost in our hearts as we are buffeted by these difficulties. The scroll has been opened and held in the hand of the Lamb who was slain. The victory song

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might
and honor and glory and blessing!"

The victory song is actually the gospel of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. It is the song that must both sustain us and propel us towards the victory that is already ours eternally celebrated in heaven and now echoed on earth whenever we share the gospel whenever we sing this song. Like the Pied Piper in that old legend the notes of this song goes out it calls to people from every nation ,tongue and tribe and they will respond. They will join the every growing ranks of His priests and conquerors until that final day. Brothers and sisters there is no more magnificent cause not more noble story into which our lives can be spent in....Let us go forth