

“Weep no more”

Rev. 4-5

INTRODUCTION: Journalist Molly Longman writes

I joked to a friend that 2022 could be the year I finally had an existential crisis. “JK!” I said. “Kind of.”

My worries, of course, could have been much worse. I was safe, employed, sheltered. But I still felt a kind of mounting dread, and ***a sense that everything could disappear in an instant.*** And if it did, what would I have then? My thoughts circled my work and my relationships: Had I accomplished enough? Should I be using my platform as a writer to do more? Was I spending enough of my life with the people I cared about? Was my purpose to shine a light on injustice, as I thought it was? Was I even capable of doing that? Or was I wasting away hunched over my laptop? Should I use my time on this unstable planet to cultivate my friendships, memorize my parents' laughs, and find the best cupcake shop in New York City? What if I wake up one day 10 years from now and I'm totally unhappy?

When I shared my spiraling thoughts with my friends, many related. We all seemed to be in a similar funk, questioning our existences, careers, and relationships.

I say to Molly, WELCOME to 2022.

Her paragraph captures the sentiment that many are feeling around the world. It is not unlike the experience of John on the Island of Patmos.

He was watching the churches he loved slip into anarchy and rebellion. An ocean separated him from his family, friends, loved ones. No doubt he was asking some of the same questions we ask in times like these. ***That's when it happened...***

TEXT: Revelation 4:2–5:14 (ESV)

2 At once I was in the Spirit,

Now John is reminding us - this is a vision.

- A vision is like watching a series of scenes from a really weird movie where everything you see is packed with meaning.
- John's body never leaves Patmos. These things are happening in the Spirit.
- The words “looked, saw, beheld” and their derivatives are the the most frequently repeated words in the book of revelation.
- He is not sleeping, that would be a dream. Visions happen while awake.
- The things John is about to see are highly symbolic and they should be read that way. For example, when he sees Jesus - he sees a lamb standing as though slain with 7 horns and 7 eyes. Now when you see Jesus don't ask him where the other 5

eyes are. Jesus is not morphing into an animal. This is a VISION.

ILLUSTRATION: Suppose one had a vision **Amelia Island** it might be described like this: Behold, out of the Atlantic rose a sea turtle. One fin upon its mother and another upon its sister (two bridges). Out of its shell rose two teeth of a megladon, with smaller teeth proceeding behind (Omni, Ritz, and all of the other hotels and businesses). The teeth sought to rise up, but they could not, for the great beast from the abyss arose to strike them down (city hall). You see?

Something else that you need to remember is that **you are SUPPOSED to imagine what John describes**. There is no book of the bible that requires more engagement of the imagination that the Revelation.

So listen and imagine...**Chapter 4 sets the scene for the drama of Chapter 5**. So imagine it with me....



² At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. ³ And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian.

Jasper and carnelian in their purest forms are **red** in appearance.

3b. and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald.



So there was a rainbow with many shades of green.

⁴ Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clothed in white garments, with golden crowns on their heads.

I've read a variety of speculations as to who these 24 elders are.

- Some suggest they are angels.
- Some suggest they are church leaders from the past 2000 years.
- Some suggest they are 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles of the Church. That is a strong possibility.

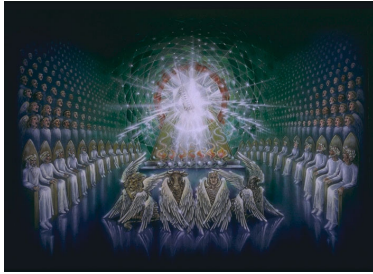
Frankly, we don't know, John doesn't tell us.

⁵ From the throne came flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and before the throne were burning seven torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God,

This is reminiscent of the scene that Israel beheld at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

⁶ and before the throne there was as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne, on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and

behind: ⁷ the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with the face of a man, and the fourth living creature like an eagle in flight. ⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all



around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" ⁹ And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹ "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

So there is the setting - The throne room of Heaven. God upon the throne in complete control, ready to execute Judgement.

Chapter 5 -



¹ 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.

A scroll could be around 30ft long, typically a sealed scroll was only written on the inside, simply because it would reveal some of the information before it was opened. But this is a good picture of bible prophecy. Some of what John sees is not new information. The prophets have spoken of it, some of the information has already been revealed, some is new info.

The scroll contains the unfolding plan of God to set all things right.

Basically, that is what the entire bible is doing. The Bible is God's story of setting right everything that went wrong in Eden.

God placed mankind in the city of Eden, gave them dominion, told them to fill and subdue the planet. They were under God's authority and they were to rule and reign over the whole planet - as reflectors of God's glory. Yet the enemy came, tempted man and a great rebellion began.

NOW LISTEN - Everything that is wrong in your life finds its essence in Eden. It's all because of sin and man's rebellion.

- Marriage problems - Man had no marriage problems before sin.
- Financial problems - Man was perfectly provided for in Eden.
- Rebellious children weren't an issue until after the fall.
- Sickness and death is a part of the fall.

- Government problems were from a failure to submit to the ultimate King.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine is simply the reverberating echos of Cain's hammer falling upon Able's skull.

In **Genesis 3:15** God says -

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

NOW - here it is....everything that has gone wrong is about to be brought to a culmination. A new city like Eden called the New Jerusalem will come down out of heaven, redeemed humanity ruling and reigning on the planet as intended. Jesus as the King of Kings on the Throne. No longer will saints like John be exiled... now satan will be exiled.

It's all in the scroll... This scroll brought immense hope to John. His Apostolic brethren have not died in vain. The Churches hadn't suffered in vain... why? There is a scroll... there is a plan...

Whatever is wrong with your life will never be made fully right until that scroll is opened. That's the practical solution.

- Were you abused as a child? The scroll holds your justice.
- Have you been falsely accused and attacked? The scroll holds your vindication.

The deep longing of your soul that has not been fulfilled on this planet, will be fulfilled with the opening of the scroll.

Until that scroll opens...

- You will not receive your full inheritance.
- Death will win, families will fail, governments might as well shut down.

BUT THERE IS HOPE - and it's bound up in that scroll with 7 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.

So this summons went out to all of Heaven and Earth.

- Who will approach the Ancient of Days and take from his hand the scroll?
- Who will break the seals, or in other words... who will bring about God's plan?

Is any man or woman worthy?

- Anyone one in the Old Testament?
- Perhaps Moses, He spoke to God face to face like a friend. Perhaps Moses can bring about the culmination of all things? But Moses is **silent**.
- Perhaps Elijah or one of the Prophets, But Elijah and the prophets are **silent**.

- Perhaps Solomon in all of his wisdom can set things right? But Solomon is **Silent**.
- Perhaps one of God's Mighty Angels? A Gabriel or a Michael, But Gabriel and Michael are **silent**

There was no one in all of heaven or all of earth who was able to approach the Ancient of Days, take the scroll and bring about God's plan of the restoration of all things.

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

Again, remember that all of our literal hope is wrapped up in that scroll. If that scroll is not open - everything John had suffered is a colossal waste of time.

There will be no resurrection, there will be no judgement, there will be no new heaven or new earth. Satan wins, Death wins, the grave wins...

Imagine if you will a silent heaven... not so much as the rustle of an angel's wing. All that broke the silence was the gasp and sobs of the weeping apostle.

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

Like the Authorian legend of one worthy to take the sword from the stone. Jesus Christ can open the scroll and break its seals.

Note the Four Fold Description of Christ:

1. The Lion of the Tribe of Judah - Speaks of His Prominence

As Isreal blessed his sons, to Judah he said, **Genesis 49:8–10 (ESV)**

⁹ 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 promise found its fulfillment in the risen Jesus Christ.

Secondly he is described as...

2. The Root of David - Speaks of His Propriety

Isaiah 11:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

As the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3 reveal, Jesus was a descendant of David both on His father's and on His mother's side. In Romans 1:3 the apostle Paul said that Jesus was "born of a descendant of David according to the flesh."

He is the proper one to open the scroll...

Third he is described as...

3. A Lamb - Speaks of His Purpose

I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain.

Arnion (Lamb), refers to a little lamb, or a pet lamb. The imagery derives from the Passover, when Jewish families were required to keep the sacrificial lamb as a household pet for four days before sacrificing it (Ex. 12:3–6).

John 1:29 (ESV)

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

In all of creation, no metaphor better described the suffering savior than that of a sacrificial lamb, who poured out his life for others.

Fourthly...we read he is...

4. Standing - Speaks of His Prosperity

The scars from the deadly wound this Lamb received were clearly visible; yet He was alive. Though demons and wicked men conspired against Him and killed Him, He rose from the dead, thus defeating and triumphing over His enemies.

Imagine how John felt when he saw Jesus had the power to bring to fruition all of the promises of God.

That is what was meant by Paul in **2 Corinthians 1:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.

Suddenly HOPE filled the heart of John. Not a fuzzy hope, I'm talking about a raging powerful SURE HOPE.

Interestingly Jesus began his public ministry by bringing HOPE by opening and reading a scroll. Luke 4:16–21 (ESV)

Then throughout the next three years you see NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH spilling over into His generation.

- Jesus provided food to the hungry by multiplying the loaves and fish.
- Jesus healed the sick, lifting the curse of sin.
- Jesus sent demons fleeing.
- Jesus calmed the storm, setting at ease the groaning of creation.
- Jesus waged war on warped religion by cleansing the temple.
- Jesus even raised the dead with a word.

Just as Jesus read the scroll, and heaven spilled over into a specific time and a specific space. Now he stands to read another scroll and heaven will spill over into all of creation.

7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. 8 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. 9 And they sang a new song,

One thing I love about Disney world, is that it takes the latest cutting edge technology and mingles it with the best of Americana. It's an experience of NEW veiled by OLD.

Heaven is similar. It is marked by the ancient traditions of the patriarchs mingled with the very definition of cutting edge creativity. New songs are being written.

9 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."

Who is that talking about? It's talking about you! Kings and Priests of God, created to lead, to rule, upon the Earth.

11 Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

13 And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

In 1922 **Helen Lemel** picked up a tract by missionary **Lilias Trotter** who served for more than 38 years as a missionary to Muslims of Algeria. The following is an excerpt from that tract called, *Which Passion Will Prevail?*

"Never has it been so easy to live in half a dozen harmless worlds at once -- art, music, social science, games, motoring, the following of some profession, and so on. And between them we run the risk of drifting about, the good hiding the best." It is easy to find out whether our lives are focused, and if so, where the focus lies. Where do our thoughts settle when consciousness comes back in the morning? Where do they swing back when the pressure is off during the day? Dare to have it out with God, and ask Him to show you whether or not all is focused on Christ and His Glory. Turn your soul's vision to Jesus, and look and look at Him, and a strange dimness will come over all that is apart from Him."

Helen Lemel Read that and wrote the words...

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!
Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

*All that John feared vanished as he beheld Jesus.
And friend, there's light for a look at the Savior.
Turn your eyes upon Him.*