

Jesus Was Fit To Redeem Revelation 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION:

If humanity endures for another 1000 years, what do you think the sociologists of the 31st Century will make of our values?

Friday, September 2, 1869, was known as “Black Friday” because it was on that date that the James Fisk and Jay Gould triggered a financial panic that rocked the United States. They did this by attempting to corner the gold market. In the wake of their actions, there was a near total collapse of the nation’s economy.

More recently, the term “Black Friday” has been applied to that Friday after Thanksgiving, which is recognized as the official start of the Christmas shopping season. It is called “Black Friday” because many retailers move from being in the red (i.e., posting a loss on the books) to being in the black (i.e., turning a profit).

We call one date “Black Friday” because it is perceived as bad for the economy. We call another date “Black Friday” because it is perceived as good for the economy.

But we call a third date “Good Friday” because the Son of God was tortured, was ridiculed and was executed on that date. If you did not know the rest of the story, you would undoubtedly ask, “How can we call this Friday ‘Good’?”

“Good”: what a term. Did you have a good vacation? Was it a good party? Did everyone have a good time?

A good education. A good income. A good family. A good future. We know what good means. We welcome “good news”. We recognize good land. We want good health. We laugh at a good joke.

How can we call this Friday “Good”? We call this Friday “Good” not because enjoyable things happened but because the best thing happened. In Romans 5:20, Paul wrote, “...where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” We call this Friday “Good” because on this date in history, the full awfulness of sin was trumped by the full awesomeness of grace. The price of our redemption was paid...paid in full.

Because of that, John, the seer of the book of Revelation, could write in chapter 5:

5 ¹ Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. ² And I saw a mighty angel

proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”³ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it.⁴ I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.⁵ Then one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶ Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.⁷ He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.⁸ And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.⁹ And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.

¹⁰ You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders.

The new song of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders is a hymn that informs us of why Jesus Christ is fit to redeem fallen humanity.

I. **The Sinless Sacrifice**

Note first the sinless sacrifice. “*You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain...*”

As I read before from Romans 5, “where sin increased, grace increased all the more.” Anyone who has considered the brutality of the cross will know the truth that sin increased at the cross. But it increased not in its grossness and vulgarity; it increased in refinement and decency. You see Jesus was not abducted by a gang of cutthroat thieves and robbers. He was not victimized by a pack of criminals and gangsters. It was not street thugs who brutalized an innocent man and nailed him to a cross.

It was polite, refined, respectable people. It was religious people. It was community leaders. It was reputable professionals and upstanding members of society. It was people like me. It was people like you.

Sin increased because at the cross, it was at its most subtle, its most sinister, its most subversive and its most pernicious. Sin was not wearing

gang colors or ski masks. At the cross, sin wore respectable robes and professional clothes.

Sin increased at the cross because it had succeeded in so blinding the minds of the best people in the community that they had no idea they were sinning. And when the best of us sin with impunity, the weakest among us don't have role models.

Sin increased at the cross because the nice people killed the Son of God.

Sin increased at the cross because there, at one point in time, every sin that had ever been sinned and every sin that ever would be sinned, were all laid upon one innocent man. That is why Paul wrote in II Corinthians 5:21:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus, who was innocence personified, became sin personified. It is a stark thought that an innocent man became guilty of every person's sin. When God looked at His beloved Son, he saw a murderer. He saw a thief. He saw a rapist. He saw a child molester. He saw a liar, a swindler, an idolater, an adulterer. The love that God had for His only begotten Son was so overshadowed by the dark cloud of iniquity that God could not bear to look and He turned His loving eyes away...and the sky grew dark...and Jesus cried out "My God! My God! Why have You forsaken me?"

Jesus alone was worthy to redeem mankind because he alone was the sinless sacrifice that sinful man needed.

II. The Blood Bought

Draw near to the cross and note the sinful sacrifice and note also the Blood Bought. John wrote, "*You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain and with your blood you purchased men for God.*"

With his blood, Jesus purchased men for God. That is phraseology from the slave markets where human flesh was bought and sold for cash and barter. Biblically, we were all slaves to sin. We'd all sold ourselves to Satan.

But the Bible teaches that on the cross, Jesus paid the price to purchase us back from the one who had enslaved our souls. As the apostle Peter wrote, "*...you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*"

In 1985, Arthur Porges wrote a short story in which he broke down the body to its most basic chemical elements, figured the weight and the value of each and then concluded that the human body is worth \$1.98. I don't know if Porges was accurate or not but let's say he was off by a factor of ten. Let's say that the human body is worth ten times what Porges calculated. Let's say a hundred times. Let's say he was off by a thousand times. Then the human body would be worth...\$1980. Anyone here willing to sell himself for \$1980? Or even \$19,800? People, you are too precious to be bought with mere money.

Lanny Wolfe, in a classic song phrased it this way:

*Too precious by far to be sold
Or ransomed for mere earthly gold.
If wealth were the way
All earth could not pay
The price that could save a man's soul.*

All the wealth of all the civilizations of all time could not purchase your soul. But the precious blood of Jesus did. That makes you blood-bought. You are not your own, you were bought with a price. You are his. He redeemed you because he was worthy. He paid your ransom because he, alone, could.

III. The Kindred Kingdom

In the hymn of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, they sing that God has made these blood-bought people to be a kingdom.

Kingdoms have come in all shapes and sizes. It was once said that the sun never set on the British Empire, it was so very vast. Monaco is less than one square mile in size. There have been large kingdoms and small kingdoms. There have been rich kingdoms and poor kingdoms. There have been powerful kingdoms and weak kingdoms. But one thing all kingdoms have in common is that they have a monarch: a king or a queen.

It is their shared loyalty to their sovereign that marks the stability of a kingdom. When all the subjects are loyal to the king, there is cohesion, solidarity and unity in the realm.

The song of the elders declares that the sacrificial Lamb of God has made the blood bought to be a kingdom. Because they have all pledged their allegiance to the same King, they are a kindred kingdom and a family of God.

We were deserted. We were isolated. We were alone. Until the King bought us and brought us into his Kingdom at which time we became a family: we belong to a kindred Kingdom.

IV. The Productive Priests

*“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased men for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

¹⁰ *You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.”*

The blood bought have been made a kingdom and priests to serve our God. For them, the priesthood is not an office to be held, a title to be worn or an honor to be enjoyed. It is a service to perform.

At the cross of Christ, we see the sinless sacrifice that purchased the blood bought so that they could become a kindred kingdom and productive priests. These are they who serve God. For them, the Lord's desires have become their desires. Their prayer is, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...and start with me.” They do not seek to manipulate God to do their bidding; they seek to do His.

Jesus was fit to redeem because he did more than just rescue us from condemnation and death; he also rescued us from futility and pointless, aimless, useless living. He has given us a purpose and a function that is purer and higher and greater than anything on earth!

CONCLUSION:

When we lived in the St. Louis area, the newscasts were filled with traffic reports. That was because traffic information was important to the people of the metropolitan area. I've noticed that here, we get very few traffic reports (almost none) but a lot of weather reports. In the farm fields and the oil fields of southeastern Illinois, we care about the weather because it affects our plans...it affects our lives and our livelihoods. Let me give you the future-cast for eternity. It is the Forecast of Reign. Because Jesus was worthy to redeem, **The Redeemed will Reign on the earth**. But note this: they will not reign on this earth. In Revelation 21, John wrote that he saw a new heaven and a new earth because the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. The redeemed will reign on the new earth that the LORD will create. If you want the forecast of reign to be your future, you need to come to the cross and accept the one...the only one...who is worthy to redeem one as precious as you.

INVITATION: #487 – “Room At The Cross For You”