



Links Players

QUESTIONS REDUX | WHO IS WORTHY?

... And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 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...." (Revelation 5:1–10, ESV).

We all need heroes! It is deep in a man's bones to have a bigger-than-life champion to admire. This inward drive to honor and emulate greatness finds expression throughout ancient, medieval, and contemporary culture.

The ancient Greco-Roman world had its fictional heroes like Hercules, who personified strength; Achilles, valor; and Odysseus, ingenuity (e.g., Trojan Horse). They also crowned their real-life Olympic champions with a sign of triumph, the laurel wreath.

Medieval culture, too, had its share of mythical heroes. Legendary stories like King Arthur captured their imagination and motivated them to action. The story of one young squire pulling the sword Excalibur from the stone, verifying his identity as the true king, and overcoming evil still inspires many today.

In our cultural moment, we appropriately elevate men of singular achievement. We applaud the winners of the Nobel Prize, Pulitzer Prize, Oscar, and ESPYs. We honor those who combine talent, passion, and perseverance to achieve what others only dream of.

In the world of golf, we elevate icons like Bobby Jones, Ben Hogan, Arnie, Jack, Tiger, Rory, and Scottie. We enshrine these men and honor their achievements in the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Across the centuries, we classify some of these giants as legends—those rare few who have scaled the summit to achieve the "Holy Grail" of Golf: The Grand Slam.

For the thousands of players who have competed at the highest levels, six men have reached these rarified heights. If we consider Bobby Jones' achievements, we could say seven men have risen to the highest pinnacles of our sport.

For all the proper recognition of men drawn from historical fact or fiction, or from all the inappropriate self-aggrandizing of vast swaths of little men with shriveled hearts and an insatiable need for praise, only one person is truly worthy of crowning.

In Revelation 5, the reader gets a sneak peek into cosmic history—the search is on for the one who conquers and is worthy to open the scroll and unlock God's redemptive purposes for history. We discover John weeping because no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was worthy.

Then John hears the elder say, "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." And when John looked expecting to see a Lion, he sees "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain."

In the greatest irony of all, John turns to see who has conquered and who alone is worthy to open the scroll. To his and our great surprise, he sees a slain Lamb.

Every civilization crowns its victors. Rome crowned Caesar. Greece crowned its Olympians. Medieval Europe crowned its kings. Modern culture crowns celebrities, billionaires, and athletic champions. Every laurel wreath celebrates someone who conquered everyone else.

In paradoxical contrast, heaven has one throne, and before it stands one worthy Champion. He did not shed the blood of others; he shed his own. He did not triumph by sacrificing others; he sacrificed himself.

At the center of history, the ultimate crown that matters belongs to the Lion of Judah who conquered as the Lamb of God slain for us.

For all the inspiration we receive from men's achievements drawn from history or myth, Jesus alone is worthy to open the scroll, reveal the meaning of history, and receive the accolades worthy of the true King.

We honor virtuous human achievement, but we bow only before the Lion-Lamb, Jesus the Christ.

Prayer: Father, teach us the wisdom of Calvary.

READING: Revelation 5:1-10

1. How does the idea of the Grand Slam in golf help illustrate the in-built human desire to recognize greatness?

2. Why is it significant that John sees a Lamb, not a Lion, as the one who is worthy to open the scroll?

3. How does the image of Jesus as both Lion and Lamb shape the way you think about power and victory?

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