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Series: For the Time is Near
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Worthy is the Lamb!
Revelation 5

We're going to continue this morning in Revelation, so please open up your Bible to Chapter Five. Last week's title was: *Worthy is the Lord!* This week's is: *Worthy is the Lamb!* Basically, chapters four and five really come together as one, so we're just separating these two chapters by seven days. Let's start out by reading verse one in Revelation, Chapter Five:

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

[Prayer] *O, Father, we come to You this morning looking to You, the Author and Perfector of our faith. You were willing to send Your Son to this earth to die in our place for sins that He did not commit, to atone for our sins that we deserve to pay for. He is our Redeemer, in fact, He is our Kinsman Redeemer because the Son became flesh and dwelt among us, and is the One who ransomed us with His lifeblood. It is for that reason that He is worthy to not only take the scroll, but to break it's seals and look into it.*

We thank You, Lord that John was able to stop weeping and instead, we will see this morning how all of heaven and earth broke out in praise and worship to You, the Lamb of God, who is worthy to be praised. I pray that as we come into that knowledge this morning that we too, would be unashamed of lifting up our voices and our hearts, and our lives to You along with all of heaven in song to You, a new song. We commit this time to You, we ask for Your blessing, and that You would do a work in each and every one of our hearts, opening up our eyes and our hearts to know You a little bit better and to confidently praise You now and for eternity. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

So a couple of weeks ago we finished studying the seven letters to the seven churches. Last week we looked at the throne of God in heaven and His worthiness as Creator to be praised. This morning, we're covering a section of Scripture that focuses on the worthiness of the Lamb. He is worthy; He is the One who we are to ascribe worth to. He is praiseworthy. He is the One we are focusing on, not only to be praised, but also to acknowledge His worth in opening up the scroll that has the seven seals.

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As these seven seals are opened, there are these dramatic events that we'll be taking a look at in the coming weeks that take place. And then things move rapidly toward the fulfillment of God's judgment and the completion of redemption. The consummation, you could say, of history; the completeness of it.

Now just to give you a glimpse of that, it's upon the breaking of the seventh seal that we have the seven trumpet judgments that begin in Chapter Eight. And when the seventh trumpet had been blown, the day of God's wrath was announced and so was ushered in the seven plagues and then the seven bowl judgments as we know them to be in Chapter 15 and 16.

But it's necessary, obviously if it's in Scripture it's very important, for us to go from knowing the worth of the Creator of the Universe to knowing the worth of the Lamb of God, who is worthy to open the scroll and break it's seals. What I hope we learn is that He is our Redeemer who is able and willing to break the seals in order to fulfill history.

As we enter into this chapter, we quickly move from being focused on the scroll (we'll get to that place next week and in the coming weeks) to seeing how John is absolutely beside himself because he's concerned; *"Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"* Knowing that until that point basically the consummation of history is on delay.

We quickly move our focus to the right hand of God the Father, who is on the throne, but more importantly to the One who approaches the throne and takes that scroll, and we see praise break forth in heaven, like we have not seen before. He is worthy; worthy of our praise and our worship.

We, along with John, can understand, especially when difficult times come and we experience absolute heartache, that when all is said and done, we can just say: "You know what, Lord? At this point, just come quickly! Just come now! Come for Your church! Have things go as quickly as possible!" We want things to be complete! We want things to be as we see in Revelation Chapter 21 where there's a new earth and a new heaven, and it all comes together and it's just perfection! Don't you long for that? Absolutely, right? Especially in difficult times.

So with John, we weep loudly, we sob, if you will, because no one was able to break the seals. But then move quickly on to praise that filled heaven as we joined them and reach a crescendo as ***"every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and in the sea,"*** and innumerable angels, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures, sung the Lamb's praises as Jesus approached the throne and took in possession this scroll with the seven seals. They knew exactly what was going on. *"Oh, there He is! He's come to take the scroll. He is the One who is worthy to break those seals."*

In order for us to worship the Lamb with knowledge, we need to understand why it is that the elders and the hosts of heaven were worshipping Him. What got them all excited?

Sometimes we get so laid back, we can be like: *"Well, that's not me, as far as worship is concerned."* Let me tell you that *they* held nothing back. You know, church, we can get the mentality of: *"Don't get out of hand."* We **can** get a little charismatic. Do you know the lifting of the hands is actually biblical? The standing up, not so much because in the presence of God it's more of falling flat down on their faces.

There are songs with lyrics like: *"I can only imagine what I'm going to do in the presence of the Lord."* I have a feeling it's going to be just like we see here; the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures around the throne of God that as the Lamb stood up to take the scroll then, *boom*, they fell down on their faces and they still sung! We can get a little expressive, that's ok. We need to lift our voices up.

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We need to be in full knowledge, not being ignorant by not reading and not knowing what the word of God says. In fact, it says to be students of the word of God, be diligent, be workers, studying the word of God, not being ignorant of it. So we too, can join the hosts of heaven in worshiping Him and praising Jesus for the same reasons.

We're going to look at two major reasons for doing this: who He is, and what He did.

Jesus is Worshiped for Who He Is (vv.1-6)

Let's read again starting in verse one and we'll go to verse six:

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

So Jesus is worshiped for who He is because He is described as being "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" in verse five.

On Wednesday we just wrapped up the Book of Genesis, but in Chapter 49 we read and studied this:

*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 [This is very important.] 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.*

Now, we understand Israel's first king was Saul, right? But, the Messiah wasn't going to come from Saul. It was very clear that He would come from the line of Judah. You see, Saul was from the line of Benjamin. So God is faithful in bringing Him through the Lion of the tribe of Judah and we see Him described as such here.

Jesus was able to prove that He came through the line of Judah. We have an account of this genealogy in Matthew Chapter One and in Luke Chapter Three. You can look through those yourself. The image of the Lion speaks of majesty, sovereignty, strength, and victory. That's how He's described at first. Those are all, by the way, characteristics, attributes that we can see of God Himself, and we see the Lamb of God described in this manner.

We also see Him described as "The Root of David", also in verse five. This term means that God brought David into existence, and as far as Jesus' humanity is concerned, Jesus had His roots in David. I know for you that's not something that is bewildering or confusing, because of what we know, and what we've come to believe who Jesus is.

In Isaiah 11:1, and also 11:10:

**¹There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**

**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.**

His resting place is absolutely glorious! And we are, one day, going to join Him in that glory!

"*The Root of David*" speaks of Jesus' deity: He was before Jesse; He was before David. And also of His attribute of being eternal: Before David, He was.

"*How this could be?*" was a question that was actually posed by Jesus to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41-46, but they refused to answer that question. Sometimes we can refuse to answer questions because we start thinking in the flesh: *To believe it is to see it.* We start thinking that way and we don't understand that God is eternal.

He was before Jesse, He was before David, He was before the foundations of the world! And yet, He subjected Himself to being a human, came to this earth and died, therefore, being our Kinsman Redeemer. It's amazing! He was *before* David, and He was also *after* David.

In order to worship Jesus, we do need to answer this question: Is He the Son of God, or is He not? There is no middle ground to stand on. We can't say, "*Well, I believe that Jesus is Michael the Archangel.*" False! "*I believe that Jesus was the brother of Lucifer.*" False! The Bible is very clear: Jesus **is the** Son of God. So I believe that we need to come to that place to where we understand, "*Lord, You work outside of us! You were before, You are now, and You will always be. Jesus, You are the Son of God.*"

He was also described as the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne in verse 6. It says: "***between the throne and the four living creatures...***" The closest that we know, at this point, to the throne of God, were the four living creatures. But it says here that He was "***between the throne and the four living creatures...***".

We also read here that He stood. I don't know if you caught that, but He *stood*. Right now He is sitting at the right hand of the Father, interceding for you and I, and at this point He just got up! I could just imagine that at that point, heaven just went quiet, holding their breath! The Lamb of God just stood up from where He was sitting, and is between the four living creatures and the throne of God. It's time for the history of mankind to be consummated, to come to a completion, as judgment was coming beginning with the breaking of the seven seals of the scroll that the Father held in His hand.

When John turned he didn't see a lion, but rather he saw a Lamb. The way the Lamb is described is as this soft, little lamb.

Most of you know that we have a lamb. (By the way, I just remembered my wife's middle name is Marie, so *Mary Had a Little Lamb.*) She is so cute, she will follow everywhere; she's a pet. She's so dependent, and as she hears our voices she starts calling and cries out; bleating. Sometimes it's like, "*Okay! That's enough already!*"

But as John turned, he didn't see the Lion. He saw, at that point, the Lamb; the Lamb Who was slain. Jesus Christ is referred to as "the Lamb" 28 times in the Book of Revelation. I want to give you just a few instances of how it is that He's referred to in this manner:

- **God's Wrath** - "the wrath of the Lamb" in Revelation 6:16

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- **God's Cleansing** - by "the blood of the Lamb" in Revelation 7:14
- **God's Church** - "the Bride of the Lamb" in Revelation 19:7; 21:9

It was this Lamb who was described as having **"seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth."**

So now we're getting into some weird stuff. *"What is that?! I've seen lambs and that's a weird looking lamb."* Well, let me tell you *the seven horns, the seven eyes, the seven spirits*, they all have meaning. We've gone through these in the first couple of chapters, and will continue on throughout the Book of Revelation.

These things speak of the attributes that belong only to God:

- **The seven horns** - God's omnipotence; He's all powerful.
- **The seven eyes** - His omniscience; He's all knowing.
- **The seven spirits** - His perfect, complete presence, His omnipresence; He is everywhere at all times.

He's being described in this manner as best as John could describe the Lamb of God, Who stood at that moment as he looked over and he was instructed to write. Those things will make more sense as we continue on this morning.

Jesus is Worshiped for What He Did (vv.7-10)

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, 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."***

Amen! Jesus is worshiped for what He did. We need to acknowledge that the fact the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders who are around the throne were each holding a harp. So that's where we get the misconception that we're all going to be sitting around on clouds and plucking at strings on a harp.

Each one is holding a harp and these golden bowls. In God's economy, gold is described and illustrated as precious, pure, and holy. What was held in those bowls? The prayers of the saints! Wow! How often do you pray? How many of your prayers, do you think, are in these golden bowls? They matter that much to God. We are told to pray without ceasing, to seek Him, to speak to Him, to build on that relationship that He made possible through His Son.

I was thinking about that. They're holding these **"golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."** A picture of the fact that our prayers are present with God and they matter! They are highly valued by God! They are kept in His presence, not in some area away from Him. They are in His presence, and held along with instruments of praise in the hands of those who are Divinely ordained to be stationed around Him. Think about that! *He inhabits the praises of His people*, is what the Bible tells us.

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The scene turned from a sobbing John, to the glorious singing of a new song sung by the twenty-four elders. Things changed quickly. They didn't sing this song standing up, by the way, as I alluded to earlier. They were prostrate before the Lamb, they were facedown, but they sang a new song. Why did the whole atmosphere change? Because they fully knew what was coming! Jesus only stood up but He hasn't opened the seals, He hasn't broken them. He just took the scroll in His hand, that's all He did. Everything was going to quickly progress to the one time in eternity that we are so looking forward to.

It was because of what He did that He was worthy of opening the scroll of the seven seals. He was worthy due to His redeeming work that He accomplished on the cross. That's why it was the picture of the Lamb, and not the Lion. As John looked over, he saw the Lamb of God. In verse five we read that He has conquered so that he can open the scroll and the seven seals. How did He conquer? He paid for it on the cross. He ransomed you and I; redeemed us by spilling His own blood.

Jesus was slain and by his blood:

1. **Jesus ransomed people from every tribe, language, and nation.** In other words, ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*** [John 3:16]

That means that no one is excluded. There is no corner, there is no darkness that God's hand cannot reach and pluck someone out of the depths of depravity that we can find ourselves in. No place! There is no murderer, there is no adulterer, there is no liar, there is no drunkard, there is no one that God cannot reach. Even the perfect religious person. No one!

And ***"whoever"*** means that it's a matter of choosing Him just as He has chosen you before the foundations of the earth were laid [Ephesians 1:4]. He wishes that none should perish but that all should come to repentance [2 Peter 3:9]. That's evidence enough!

Yesterday I was going over some Scriptures and talking about how some vessels are for honor, and some vessels are for dishonor. But as we continue in context, we realize that it's because of our choosing that we are either honorable or dishonorable, not because God has condemned us, ***"For there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"*** [Romans 8:1]. He doesn't condemn; we are condemned already! Why? Because of our sin!

So it's a matter of choosing, but we need to understand that grace is available for everyone. This was only possible because He took upon Himself the sin of all, and paid for it with His lifeblood.

2. **Jesus also made "them" a kingdom.** These are the results of what had taken place and all in heaven understood it perfectly.

Who is ***"them"***? Those people who believed that Jesus is the Son of God and have surrendered their lives to Him, and in turn have come to possess forgiveness and eternal life in the Lamb of God. This is why they were praising Him! With that forgiveness and with that grace that we can know through Jesus Christ we are joined heirs of the riches of God. That is unfathomable! We can't even begin to understand what those riches are.

We're catching a glimpse of knowing peace through Jesus Christ and the opportunities that we have; access to Him and to the throne room of grace. We understand and there's evidence of it by the whole

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new life we experience once we surrender our lives to Jesus. There's evidence of all His riches, but one day we will know them in full.

"Priests" speaks of service in God's kingdom unto God.

"Reign" speaks of joining Him and ruling under His authority on day on earth. That's pretty amazing, but you know what? It will come about. He said it; it's true, and that's it.

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down on their faces and sung a new song to the Lamb of God, to Jesus, because they knew all of this with complete knowledge. In heaven, faith is no longer necessary as we will know just as we are known. 1 Corinthians 13:12 is very clear about that. They knew, but today I pray we worship in faith for what is certain and told to us in Scripture, and one day will be known and experienced for eternity. Worthy is the Lamb! They broke out in praise, fell down on their faces, worshiping the Lamb of God!

Jesus is Worshiped for What He Possessed (vv.11-14)

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.

And all God's people said, "Amen!" This is exciting stuff! Going through Revelation and studying up to this point, and looking beyond it...wow! As this begins to happen, may we rejoice and look forward to all of this taking place.

Jesus at this point was worshiped for what He possessed. We see here that the worship just got a little louder. He was worshiped alongside the Father, for they are one God; three in One. They possess all power, all wealth, all wisdom, all might, all honor, glory and blessing. You can see it in their praise:

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

To Him be praise forever and ever! And then you see the second stanza here:

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

And they will just continue this for eternity, and they'll worship God really, really loud!

Jesus didn't receive this type of worship while He was on earth. In fact, Isaiah 53:4-5 says:

***⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.***

***⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.***

He was a humble servant, born to die, but now He is receiving the worship of the innumerable, the countless. He became the poorest of poor, and yet He possesses all riches of heaven and earth. He was mocked and laughed at because they thought Him a fool, and yet He is the very wisdom of God. He shared in the weakness of humanity and experienced everything we do; becoming weary, thirsty, hungry, and even weeping over the loss of people He was close to. He experienced humiliation and they treated Him with contempt. And yet, this is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Possessor of heaven and earth; He is our Creator and He is our Redeemer.

Worthy is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Worthy is the Lamb to be praised and honored, to be worshiped in this manner! Everyone around Him in close proximity fell on their faces, and all of heaven and earth just sprung out in songs of praise to the King! Worthy is the Lamb to be praised for He is the One who is able to take the scroll from the hand of the Father and to break it's seals, one by one. Jesus is worshiped because of who He is, what He did, and what He possesses.

In light of what was just read to you, if you understood those who have full knowledge of Who the Lamb of God is, and you saw their response to Him standing up, knowing what was to come, we also, in faith should reflect that not only in song and in our posture in singing, but in our posture in life .

As we come to know things like this in the Bible, our worship, our praise should get louder! LOUDER! It's like, *"Hey, nothing is going to come between me and my God! I know Him very well, and I know Him enough to where I can tell you about ways in which He is real in my own life. How he took this wretched soul, plucked me out of the depths of sins, forgave me by His grace and gave me a whole new heart. Putting nothing else above Him and living simply for His glory. Nothing else!"*

What has gotten in the way? It's ourselves, and so many different things that we put God to the side and we don't rightfully acknowledge Him the way, as we just read this morning, that the hosts of heaven do. I pray that we know Him the way they do.

Are you ready to worship? Do you possess Jesus, and more importantly, does He possess you? Full possession, unhindered, without anything else getting in the way. Have you let Him into every area of your life? Have you allowed Him to just completely do a work in your life?

As He reveals things in your life just continually give it up to Him. *"You know what? That's of no worth to me. I don't want to brag, boast or anything about those things. They're all Yours and I confess them to You."* Can you do that? Or, is there still some sense of pride? Let's know this in full this morning that we too, may rejoice and sing a new song of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Lord!

Steven said earlier that when we're taking Communion we are recognizing the death of our Lord until He comes back for us; and He is coming back! We are recognizing how He sacrificed for us. He said the taking of Communion in an unworthy manner is either to do it flippantly, *"I'm in sin, I don't care. He's graceful, He'll*

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forgive me", and don't regard Him at all. As Steven said, "We are taking care of business, coming to the Lord humbly, genuinely, sincerely asking the Lord to forgive us of our sins, even as Christians, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Just make me right before I go and share in Communion and be a witness of what I say I believe."

But then there's another way that we can come to the table in an unworthy manner and that is not knowing Him at all! There's going to come a day when we're going to come before the Lord and some will tell Him, "Lord, I did this...I did that...I claimed You as Lord." And for some, unfortunately, He will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew You." Why? Because we're doing it for the wrong reasons, we're doing it for ourselves, for God to bless us. Really not even knowing Him, we are asking for His blessings, but yet we're not willing to sacrifice our own lives, to deny ourselves and pick up our cross. We're not willing to do that.

I'll close with this: If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, just know that He's offering it to you, and He's offering it freely. He asks nothing of you except for repentance. Basically, what that is, is *surrender*. That's it! Recognizing that your sins have separated you from the Father and its through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross that He shed His blood, died in your place, paying for your sins; past, present, and future. And by asking for His forgiveness, and by receiving Him as Lord and Savior, genuinely and sincerely, then you are forgiven of all of your sins. You have, therefore been reconciled unto the Father and have a relationship with Him. That's it!

How does that happen? "*Lord, forgive me. I acknowledge that my sins have offended You and separated me from You. I ask that You would forgive me. I ask, Lord Jesus, that You would come into my life and be my Savior, and help me walk with You, and live to your glory all the days of my life. Give me a new heart. Give me a whole new life. Help me to walk with You, and in You.*" I'm just telling you to pray *like* this. It's not those words exactly, but that's the basic elements of coming before the Lord asking for forgiveness and coming into a new relationship with Jesus Christ, knowing the certain hope of being in God's glory one day. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord [2 Corinthians 5:8], and you will know that.

[Prayer] *Father, we are truly thankful. Worthy are You, O God, Creator of the heavens and the earth. Worthy are You, Lamb, for You are our Redeemer, You have ransomed us with Your blood. I pray that we would realize this, receive this as our own, and come to know this fully; that we would receive it by faith and that it would cause us to cry out in praise to You, just as the hosts of heaven did as the Lamb of God stood up and simply took the scroll from the hand of the Father; ready to break the seals and open up the scroll that was written on the front and on the back.*

I pray that we too, would take this scroll before us and believe it; the Bible, the word of God, breathed by You to be read by us so that we would know eternal life. Break down any barriers that we put up. I pray, Lord, that we would come into a right relationship with You by simply surrendering ourselves and knowing Your grace, Your forgiveness, Your love, Your compassion, Your embrace. O Father, we long for that!

I pray if there's anyone here who's under the impression that they can continue on and be fully at peace and yet hold on to something that is sinful, something that is totally breaking Your heart, Lord, that You would break that down. Break down that pride, Father, and bring whoever it is to humility and that they would simply surrender to You and give everything to You, and that they would truly deny themselves and pick up their cross. May they find and know life in You, abiding in the Son.

So Lord, may we be excited knowing You personally. I thank You for this moment that You've given to us, I pray that we would take full advantage of it, redeeming the time. We pray this to Your glory. In Jesus' name. Amen.