

Revelation Chapter 5

5:1 A Look at a book

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.”

A. The one sitting on the throne is, of course, God the Father, chapter 4:2-5.

B. In the right hand of God the Father is a book. This seems to actually be a book written in a scroll, rolled up, written on both sides, sealed with seven seals which seem to be located on the edge of the scroll, so as to allow a certain portion of it to be unrolled at a time as the seals are opened.

C. If we wonder why the book has seven seals, I think the best answer will lie in understanding something about the number seven itself. As we’ve already mentioned, the number seven is the number of perfection and completion. The book of Revelation is a book of sevens because in it God will bring to completion his plan for his creation and the perfect age will then be ushered in. So, when the seventh seal of this book is opened, the things in it brings to completion God’s dealings with this world. As a number of expositors have remarked, this book seems to be the title deed to the world.

5:2 A Loud proclamation

“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”

Since there’s many angels in the book of Revelation as in the Bible altogether, and since it is impossible to identify many of them, and since this particular one is not identified, we will not speculate as to who he is. God has many angels and here he has one whose task it is to act as a herald, proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book”?

A. This angel acts as the King’s (God’s) herald.

B. This angel is strong as all angels are.

C. This angel has a loud voice. Heaven usually is not a soft spoken place. This angel’s voice carries through out all of heaven, earth, and even into hell, under the earth, verse 3.

5:3-4 A Lost cause

“And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”

The fact that no one was found worthy to open the book was a source of great despair to John, he wept much.

A. There are many great men in heaven, many wonderful saints up there, Adam the head of the whole human race wasn’t able, Noah the ark builder was not able, Moses was not able, and none of the prophets were able. All of them had sinned in some way in their lives.

B. There are none on earth who are able to open the book. Though there are many great men on earth now and will be during the tribulation time, none are able to open this book because all men are sinners.

C. There certainly is no one in hell that can open the book, no devil, no demon, no spirit, no lost soul, no angel. No one could open it or even look on it. It is a holy book! It is a powerful book! Even John himself can’t open it, and he hangs his head and weeps much because of it.

5:5-7 The Lion of Juda

“And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and 10, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

A. One of the elders, see chapter 4:4 and comments, speaks up and assures John that there is one who is able to open the book.

B. The Lion of the tribe of Juda is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ himself, Genesis 49:9-10. “The Root of David” is likewise a description of the Lord Jesus Christ, Isaiah 11:1-5. He is the son of David, of the tribe of Judah, and he is the coming King, Acts 2:25-34, Acts 15:16-18, He has prevailed over sin, death, hell, and the grave. He has the right to open the book.

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C. The Lion is also the Lamb. In the midst of the throne and of the four beast, and in the midst of the elders, (Jesus is the central attraction of his churches, chapter 1:13, and of heaven), stood a lamb as it had been slain, John 1:29,36, Isaiah 53. The words “as it had been slain” speaks of Christ’s death and burial. The fact that here “stood a Lamb” speaks of Christ’s resurrection from the grave, I Corinthians 15:1-4. The fact that the lamb is seen as having seven horns and seven eyes, speaks of the seven Spirits of God. Another reference to the deity, fullness, and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. In scripture horns are often a symbol of power and kingdoms. Christ has all power and is not only omnipotent, but also omniscient and omnipresent.

5:8-14 The Lauding of the Lamb

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beast said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

A. When Christ takes that book from the hand of the Father, the four beast and the twenty four elders fall down before him, compare chapter 4:9-11. Worship is what the redeemed and reconciled do in heaven. In worshipping the Lamb every one of them had harps which evidently they are playing before the Lord, verse 8, and every one of them have golden vials full of odours, which are identified as being the prayers of the saints. Our prayers are in deed as the old saying goes, “bottled up”.

B. They, particularly the elders, sung a new song, saying “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. This verse reinforces what we said in chapter 4, these elders are redeemed men who represent all of the church all over the world. Christ has purchased the title deed of the world with his own blood, verse 9.

C. Their new song continues, And hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth, verse 10. Compare chapter 1:6. Every believer is presently a priest, 1 Peter 2:9, and will one day reign as kings on the earth, 1 Timothy 2:12. Our priesthood is now, our kingship will be during the Millennium.

D. John hears the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders, and thousands upon thousands of angels, verse 11. They are all praising God, verse 12. The Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to receive all power, riches, strength, honour, glory, and blessings. He died for us!

E. Every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and in the sea lifted up their voices in an anthem of praise to God. You see heaven isn’t usually a soft spoken place. Or, is it that John the apostle was heard by all these as he shouted the praises of God?

F. To this great anthem of praise, the four beasts said Amen, and the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped the eternal God. The church need to get used to falling prostrate before God.

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