

# The Gospel in Revelation

4) The action of Christ in taking the scroll brought redemption to every kindred, tongue, people and nation (Revelation 5:9).

5) The taking of this scroll made us kings and priests to God, making us a part of God's royal and priestly family (Revelation 5:10).

Satan claimed us as his lawful possession and our destiny was thought to be sealed. But this is not the end of the story. Christ prevailed. The Lion of Judah has taken the scroll. The slain Lamb has purchased mankind. Not because we're worthy, not because we deserve it, but because He is worthy.

“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 odors, 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 honor, 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 honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.’ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever” (Revelation 5:8-14).

It should be no surprise, then, that John sees “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, . . . saying, ‘Blessing and honor, and glory, and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever’” (Revelation 5:13, NKJV).

The message of Revelation 5 is summed up in Hebrews 2:6-9:

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; Thou crownedst him with glory

and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; *that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man*” (Hebrews 2:6-9).

Dear reader, in the light of all that Christ has done for us, won't you pray this prayer with me: Father, thank you so much for showing us Your love through Your Son Jesus. I claim His victory on my behalf, and accept Him as my personal Savior. I anxiously await the day I see Him face to face.

## Summary

Through the sacrifice of Christ, the prince of this world is cast out (John 12:31). Forever broken are Satan's claims to this earth. Mankind has been redeemed. The title deed to this earth is to be opened and amended. The words, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29), wash over the nations and individuals recorded there in a blessing of comfort and hope. A message of good tidings of great joy for all people is about to be proclaimed. It is a message that will change the history of nations and the destiny of souls.

Though the world does not acknowledge it, Christ has, at an infinite cost, purchased the human race. He is the second Adam, the new Head of the human family. Each one of us has a destiny in Christ. He holds our new life ready for us to accept it from Him. He holds a just claim to every human being, not only by creation but also by redemption. He is the redeemer of the fallen race, and He has been given the deed of possession, which entitles Him to claim all mankind as His own. He has, by His own blood, signed the emancipation papers of every slave to sin. Amen.

# Preludes of Hope

## The Sealed Book

As we have taken up the study of Revelation, we have seen that its central theme is the gospel of Christ. This wonderful message of good news is the full focus of the symbolic language in Revelation 5. Notice as the picture is unfolded to John:

“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. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?’ 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. 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, lo, 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” (Revelation 5:1-6).

The first verses of this chapter focus on the book or “scroll” sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1, NIV). According to the law in Old Testament times, title deeds containing the evidence of ownership, such as property ownership, were sealed in this way (Jeremiah 32:9-11). The scroll in the hand of Him who sits on the throne represents such a title deed, but to what?

John's weeping over the fact that no man can open or loose the seals intimates that this sealed scroll is the title deed to the earth. It would

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thus contain a description of the history and destiny of all of Earth's inhabitants, which explains why there is writing "within and on the backside" (Revelation 5:1). The destiny of every person and nation is sealed inside this scroll. What is that destiny? According to the Bible, all people are guilty, found wanting, "for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). No man can change this fate.

Since the fall of our first parents in the Garden of Eden, Satan has claimed the earth as his lawful property. Notice how this is brought out in the book of Job:

"Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, 'Whence comest thou?' Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it'" (Job 1:6-7).

Here is a gathering of representatives, beings from all of God's creation, and who should show up, but Satan. "What are you doing here?" is the basic question put to him. His answer seems brimming with confidence: "I've come from Earth. I have gone to and fro and up and down in it. The human race has given its allegiance over to me. I am the prince and representative of the earth. That is why I am here." Even Christ acknowledged that Satan is the "prince" of this world (John 12:31).

John the revelator understands the meaning attached to the sealed scroll. This is why John weeps uncontrollably when no man is found worthy to open the sealed book. As he looks on, it seems no man can change the terrible fact that nothing can be done to redeem Earth. We have sold ourselves to Satan and no man in heaven, in Earth, or under the earth can unseal humanity's fate.

What does the text mean by "no man in heaven, nor in Earth, neither under the earth?" No man "in heaven" refers to those who are presently in heaven, such as Enoch, who had such a close walk with the Lord that God took him directly without seeing death (Genesis 5:22-24). Or Elijah or Moses who were also taken to heaven (see 2 Kings 2:11; Jude 9; Matthew 17:3). Though these men were great prophets, men of God, their righteousness has no redeeming power.

No man "in Earth" means you, me, pope or president. This scroll represents the title deed to the earth. Adam and all his descendants have been sold into sin. No man living on Earth today, no matter how good, holy or powerful he may seem, can redeem us from sin.

No man "under the earth" is referring to those who lie in the grave. The Bible says the dead saints are buried, such as David (Acts 2:29, 34). They have not yet "ascended" to heaven but still rest in the grave. And although David was a man after God's own heart, he cannot redeem the race from the sin problem.

No wonder John "wept much." The true picture of our hopeless, helpless condition would cause us to weep as John did. Yet this is not the end of the story. Recognizing that we cannot save ourselves from sin, understanding that no mere human being can remedy us from our personal guilt, is the first step on the wondrous journey of salvation. As John realizes the hopelessness of the human race, he is comforted with the words, "Weep not" (Revelation 5:5).

Weep not. Seven letters that form two simple words even a small child can understand. But these two words usher us into the rest of the story—the beautiful gospel message.

Yes, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Yes, "the wages of sin is death; *but* the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). Did you hear that? Eternal life is the *gift* of God. It is a *gift* freely given! We do not earn it. We *cannot* earn it. No man in heaven or Earth or under the earth is worthy of it, yet it is ours. Salvation to the chief of sinners is freely brought to all and bestowed on all who will have it.

So dry those eyes, John, Steve, Kim and whoever you may be. Mark how the elder encourages us to "*behold* the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David," who has "prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof" (Revelation 5:5). This *behold* is not just a suggestion. While it falls short of an arbitrary command, the call to "behold" Jesus Christ is the secret of success for all who would be saved (1 John 3:1; 2 Corinthians 3:18).

And when we behold, what will we find? From the symbol of a lion, we could rightly expect to see a majestic being, a king and mighty conqueror. Yet, when John looks for such a being, he beholds a "Lamb as it had been slain" (Revelation 5:6).

When these two descriptions—one a conquering king, the other an innocent, slain lamb—are placed side by side, the price of redemption looms unfathomable. The Lamb has "seven horns and seven eyes" representing the all-powerful and all-seeing God of heaven. Yet Jesus Christ, the omnipotent, omniscient King of the universe, one with God, Creator of all things, took the form of a man and was made a little lower than His created angels. He humbled Himself to become the likeness of sinful flesh (Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 8:3). Then He went even lower. He came to this earth in the form of a servant—not a king or even a middle-class citizen. The God of heaven was born in a stable. He lived a life of service, then died the death of the cross.

It was no ordinary death, the death of the cross. The death He "tasted" was abandonment, being forsaken of God (Matthew 27:46). But because He tasted it, we don't have to (Revelation 20:6). Christ gained for us the victory over the flesh, the power of sin and death itself.

We cannot overestimate the implications of this victory. Christ became the new Head of the human family. Just as Adam was the first head of the race and all nations have come forth from him, so it is with Christ. He is called the spiritual, or last, Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45-47). All humanity now has a new spiritual destiny awaiting them in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:48).

It is in light of this wonderful truth that the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fall down and worship Christ (see Revelation 5:8). The accomplishment of Christ brings wonder and redemption to the world. "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" (Revelation 5:9, NIV).

In the context of Revelation 5, there are at least five indications that the scroll in the hand of Him who sits on the throne represents the title deed to the earth:

- 1) No man can take the scroll or open it, meaning we cannot redeem ourselves from sin (Revelation 5:3-4).
- 2) The Lion of the tribe of Judah could and did take the scroll; He alone was able to redeem us from sin (Revelation 5:5).
- 3) In order to take the scroll, the King of heaven became as a lamb slain; our redemption cost the life of the God-man, Jesus Christ (Revelation 5:6, 12).