

Revelation A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #15
Revelation 5:1-14
10/18/2006

The Book, The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, and the Lamb

The worship scene in heaven, depicting the raptured saints worshipping the Lord God, which we saw in chapter four, continues in chapter five and what we read is laid upon the foundation God gave us in chapter four. This point is significant because many Bible students seem to disconnect the two chapters. Chapter four began with John seeing God upon the throne and closed with the scene of the Lord Jesus Christ being worshipped as the Creator of all this world. In 4:2-3 where John told us about the One upon the throne he did not describe a form, only the brilliant and glorious presence of that One.

However, when we come to 5:1 John saw the **“right hand of Him that sat upon the throne.”** Some are puzzled by this difference in descriptions. Suffice it to say that God can present Himself in any manner or form He chooses whenever He desires. Often, throughout the Bible God has chosen to present Himself in forms that are understandable to men and emphasize certain truths that men can comprehend. That is the situation here. In the understanding of men in John’s day, **“the right hand”** symbolized authority and might. What John sees is not a confirmation or proof that God looks like we do, with hands such as ours, but to convey the truth that He is acting and speaking with authority.

The significance of **“the right hand”** is pertinent to what we read in chapter five, as is the fact that Jesus is worshipped as the Creator of all things.

Revelation 5:1 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.

Revelation 5:2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

Revelation 5:3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

In **“the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book”** was seen by John. That **“book”** was not like our books of today, but a scroll, rolled up with writing on both sides.

Many fanciful conjectures and interpretations have been brought forward regarding that **“book,”** but what it represents, in the context of the passage is easily seen. **“The book”** is **THE TITLE DEED TO ALL CREATION** and is presented by God Who owns all things (Psalm 24:1; 50:10; Haggai 2:8; Ezekiel 18:4). Since God, Who cannot be known by man unless God manifests Himself (John 1:18), He has made Himself known to man as GOD THE SON, GOD THE FATHER is going to present **“the book”** to GOD THE SON and that is what we shall be reading about in chapter five.

This **“book”** was **“sealed with seven seals.”** While it is interesting to note that, in the times of the Roman rule, an official, legal document was sealed with seven seals, that is not the reason this book has seven seals. In the Book of Revelation numerals have more meaning than simply listing a sequence of items and the number seven represents completeness. Thus, everything created, no matter what it is, is included in this **“book.”**

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

This is a very important question. The answer to it will provide the basis for the remainder of the message contained in this book, The Revelation of Jesus Christ.

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If there is anyone anywhere who can legally claim ownership to this world, let him step forward and make his claim. The events to be described in this Revelation of Jesus Christ can only be done by One who has the authority of ownership over all this creation. The events, which shall be described in this book, will involve every part of creation and every person who has ever lived. Only the owner has the right and authority to do the things with and to this creation that are going to be disclosed; therefore, the rightful owner needs to be openly identified. Thus, the call from the angel went out to all of creation.

In our country, we cherish what we call “the right to property ownership.” We design, shape and manufacture various items and claim ownership of them. We register them with the government to stake our claims. We secure title deeds to property, use it for our desires and file law suits against anyone who violates our property rights of ownership. But, do we really own them?

King David “owned great riches and much property,” but he recognized that he did not really own any of it (1 Chronicles 29:11-16), but what he was giving to God was actually God’s and all that he was doing was giving back to God that which legally belonged to God already. When God was giving instructions about the use of the land that He had promised to give to the Israelites, He gave them instructions about how they were to use the land because He was the owner and retained ownership rights to it (Leviticus 25:23). When they violated His instructions about the land He caused them to be taken away from the land into captivity (2 Chronicles 36:17-21; Leviticus 26:14-35).

In spite of man’s claims to property ownership, when the angel calls for the owner of this world to step forward, no man can step forward with that claim for man only uses what really belongs to God. God only gives him temporary possession and use of it.

Satan seems to think that he owns this world and, for a time, acts out the role of an owner. In His Word God explains why this is so. In Revelation 12 where God summarized Satan’s conflict with God we are told that, following his rebellion in heaven against God, Satan “**was cast out into the earth and his angels with him**” (Rev. 12:9) where he “**deceiveth the whole earth.**” In various places Satan is identified as the prince, or ruler, of this earth and is even called “**the god of this world**” (2 Corinthians 4:4). In many ways it often does seem that Satan is in control of this world for he exercises control over all who will yield themselves to him as his servants (Ephesians 2:1-3). In the passage in Ephesians Paul testified that this was the case in his life as well as in the lives of others. However, at various times, God asserted His sovereign authority to interrupt Satan’s exercise of his stolen power and to use “Satan’s things” against him and for His own glory. Such was the case when God chose to use Cyrus as His servant to set His people free from their bondage in Babylon (Isaiah 44:28-45:3).

Satan really owns nothing at all and is only allowed by God to use the resources of this world to accomplish God’s purposes according to God’s own sovereign plans and timetable. When the angel calls out in Revelation 5:2 for the One, who properly has the legal claim of ownership to this world, to step forward to open up this book, Satan cannot step forward to assert that claim.

Therefore, when the angel calls out “**Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? ... no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book neither to look thereon.**”

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John's response was one of confusion and sorrow. What was happening was beyond his ability to comprehend. He was in heaven, but he was still a man with limited understanding. He certainly knew that the world from which he had been raptured had been made a mess because of sin. He knew that someone was needed to straighten out the problems brought about by the wickedness of Adam's descendants. Suddenly, it was as if God reached His tender hand of love down to dry John's tears with what happened next.

One of the twenty four elders he had seen about the throne (4:4), who had spiritual illumination, stepped forward to comfort John with some wonderful news: **“Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”**

Christ Jesus has already been worshipped as Creator by the saints in heaven (4:11). As Creator of all things He owns all things. Since neither Satan nor man has ever created, brought into existence, a single thing, neither Satan nor any man could rightfully claim to be owner of any thing. However, Christ Jesus has created each and every thing (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17) and everything comes from Him and will return to Him (Romans 11:36). Therefore, Jesus' first claim of ownership is based upon the fact that He is Creator.

This presents a sharp contrast between those who worship and serve the Lord, accepting every word in His Bible as being true and from Him, and those who adhere to Satan's theology of evolutionism. They worship at evolutionism's altar, denying that Jesus created this world. Evolutionism, proclaimed by Satan's servants as science, is nothing more than Satan's religion. That evolutionism is a religion is evidenced by the fact that following and adhering to it are many more steps of faith, believing in the words of men, than is required to follow Jesus which requires one step of faith. Those who reject this view will not admit that in order to follow evolutionism requires the adherents to exercise faith in accepting the assumptions of many, many men. And, in doing so, they have to ignore the many times those assumptions have been proven to be false and based upon little more than faulty thinking.

Those who profess to follow Jesus, and are indeed His followers, and go to heaven, will quickly learn that Jesus is the Creator. As the Creator, the source, the owner of all things, He has the legal right, authority and power to use His creation to do the things which are described in this Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. This is a critical point and the acceptance of it removes many difficulties encountered by some who have trouble understanding and accepting the things described herein. This is the first basis of Jesus' authority over this world. The second basis was explained to John in the next verses.

Identifying Jesus as **“the Lion of the tribe of Judah”** takes us back to Jacob's prophecy about the descendants of his sons (Genesis 49:10) to identify the Messiah's relationship to Abraham and the covenant God made with him (Genesis 12:1-3). As a lion has no natural enemies which can defeat it, neither is there anyone who can defeat the Messiah.. Identifying Jesus as **“the Root of David”** takes us back to God's promise to David that the Messiah would sit upon his throne and that throne would be eternal (2 Samuel 7:12; Psalm 89:29-36). The significance of this promise of God to King David is emphasized by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost when he identified Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 2:29-30).

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Thus, in addition to emphasizing His right to rule over His creation as Creator, Jesus' right to rule over this world further was strengthened by focusing upon Him as the fulfillment of God's prophecies in the Old Testament, prophecies with which all Jews were familiar. As Jacob had said in Genesis when he spoke about Judah's descendant, Jesus was going to utilize His scepter of authority over His world. These two identifications of Jesus would serve to emphasize the special "Jewish nature" of this Revelation and the things that were to transpire in the future regarding God's judgment upon sin.

The One who had the scepter of the authority of God's King and the King of Israel, the One who was a descendant of David and heir to His throne was the same One as the Creator of all things, and by virtue of that, owner of all things with authority over all things, and He was entitled to receive the book and **"had prevailed to open the book and loose the seven seals thereof."**

But wait, the elder seemed to say. Not only was Jesus entitled to receive the book and open it because He is the Creator, and not only because He was the Messiah, sent by God to set Israel free, but there was another reason He was entitled to receive and open the book which is the title deed to the earth.

"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. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne."

In addition to all of the above, Jesus had also paid the purchase price to redeem all creation from the bondage of Satan. The Lamb had paid the price of redemption; therefore, it was the Lamb who must be recognized as the rightful owner — He was twice owner by virtue of being both Creator and Redeemer — of all of creation.

John was still a spectator to the awesome scene. He saw the Lamb, a diminutive, little lamb, denoting both its gentleness and willingness to be sacrificed as hundreds of thousands of lambs had been at the temple over the years as a picture of Jesus' propitiatory, sacrificial death on the Cross.

When He came into this world He had been introduced as **"the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the world"** (John 1:29) by John the Baptist to this same writer of The Revelation of Jesus Christ. As John saw Him in heaven, He still bore the marks of a slain lamb. Perhaps He always will. It may well be that, when we get to heaven and see Him, He will still appear as a slain lamb.

He had **"seven horns and seven eyes"** picturing complete power for He is omnipotent. He had **"seven eyes"** picturing complete and perfect knowledge of everything for He is omniscient. These two symbolic pictures represent, we are told, **"the seven Spirits of God,"** or complete Holy Spirit. The trinity is present. GOD THE FATHER is on the throne. GOD THE SON is the vicarious, sacrificial Lamb. And, GOD THE SPIRIT is also present in His fullness and completeness.

As the Lion, Christ has sovereign authority and is the judge. As the Lamb, He is the Savior. As Creator, as fulfillment of all of the Old Testament promises of God as the Lion and the Lamb, He alone is worthy for He is both Owner and Redeemer of all mankind. It all goes together. Each characteristic is related to the others. Do not separate them for He is all of them.

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And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

From the Father to the Son the title deed of all the earth passes. This total and perfect agreement had been spoken of by Jesus to the Jews in John 5:26-30.

And this full agreement extends to the time of judgment. When the time of tribulation is over, when the millennial kingdom has completed its assignment, then this One, Who here appears as a “Lamb slain” will be seen sitting upon the throne of judgment to pass eternal sentence upon all who have rejected His offer of redemption.

But there was a great host of saints there in heaven as witnesses to the passing of the book from THE FATHER to THE SON because they had been redeemed by the blood 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.”**

In the most glorious service of worship possible, those who had been gathered around the throne in the first part of the scene (Rev. 4:4-6) are now bowing down before the slain Lamb utilizing the appropriate instruments of praise. In addition, as they sing this glorious hymn of praise, they seem to be joined by a countless number of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb from every nation and ethnic group upon the earth. As they continue to burst forth in praise, these **“ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands”** speak of not only His what He has done to redeem them from sin and death, but also what He has redeemed them to be, i.e., **“kings and priests who shall reign upon the earth.”**

It is quite possible that the innumerable multitude John saw included all the redeemed of all times bowing before the Lamb in the fullest possible expression of gratitude. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength and honor, and glory and blessing.”

Perhaps this is what our Lord had prayed for in John 17:24 when He prayed “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me before the foundation of the world.” If so, then those assembled before the Lamb, some who had seen Him in His time of humiliation on the Cross, will then see Him in all of His glory. What a day that shall be!

“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 for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

The Scripture speaks for itself. No other words need to be uttered or written.