

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles to Revelation 5 –

We have come to that point in Revelation where we are looking into the future.

For John, the future starts when a door opened in heaven and he was caught up before the throne of God.

He began to describe what he saw.

The throne of God.

He described the radiance being emitted from the throne.

A green rainbow around the throne.

Twenty-four elders with golden crowns.

Lightning, thunder, and voices.

Four living creatures known as the cherubim with four faces and six wings – two to cover their faces because they couldn't look at God's holiness and two wings to stand on because they couldn't set foot on holy ground and two wings to hover.

And the last thing that John described was lots of worship.

This only sets the stage for the main event ... chapter five.

Let's pray...

Read Revelation 5

Now, before we start looking closer on our text, I want to talk a little bit about this scroll that we find here in chapter five –

Because the first question that is asked when someone reads this chapter is what was in the scroll?

And I am pretty sure that everyone of you that read it wants to know what is on the scroll.

I am going to let you know.

I don't know!!!

And the reason I don't know is because the bible doesn't clearly tell us what was written on the scroll.

I believe that if the Holy Spirit believed it was important for the believer to know, the scriptures would reveal what was written on the scroll.

I believe the emphasis is not the contents of the scroll but on who is able to open the scroll.

With that being said, I am going to give you two different suggestions of what was written on the scroll.

One idea is that the scroll contained the title deed to the Earth.

And the thinking behind that was that when God gave the Children of Israel the Promised Land, He told them it was to remain theirs perpetually – meaning forever.

And in the book of Joshua we see the land divided among the tribes and the families.

The land couldn't be sold or bought, it had to remain within the family's inheritance forever.

The land could be leased out but then it had to revert back to the family after so many years.

If the owner of the land got into deeper financial trouble and had to relinquish his land to his creditors, the title deed would be handed over to the creditors with the condition of repayment written on the outside of the title deed.

If that person was unable to repay, God made it to where a close relative who had the means to repay the debt, the kinsmen redeemer – he would then be able to restore it for them.

We see an example of this in the Book of Ruth – Boaz was the kinsmen redeemer who reclaimed Ruth's lost heritage.

So the idea is that God gave man the title deed to the Earth in the Garden of Eden – when man fell, the title deed was relinquished to satan.

The second idea – and the one I lean toward – is that what was written on the scroll is simply God's will and testament – the idea is that because God is all knowing, He has a scroll in His hand in which the history of the universe is already written. Therefore, He alone is able to open up the scroll of the consummation of history.

[Rev 5:1-14 NKJV] 1 And I saw in the right [hand] of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

Back in chapter four, John saw God's throne, who sits on God's throne – God.

Here John looks and he sees God holding a scroll in His right hand – the hand of authority.

Now, we have to remember that the time that John lived in - he didn't live in 2020 – he received this vision late in life ~ 90 AD, during this time, Rome was in charge.

So when a Roman citizen wanted to make a will, he would invite the heir, the executor, and five witnesses, and as the will was rolled up, they would take hot wax and everyone would put their seal.

So in order to open up the will, the seven individuals would each be responsible for breaking their own seal.

God is both the executor and the heir and because John 17:24 tells us that God's will, His redemption plan was made before creation, He is the five witnesses.

Therefore, only He can open up the scroll.

2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. 4 So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

To look upon the scroll, one must have the right to open the scroll and possess it – and no creature was found worthy.

Not the angels in heaven

Not the elders in heaven

And most certainly, not anyone here on earth.

There is no one who can answer the challenge made by the angel.

And because of this – John begins to cry.

You see church, no one could answer the challenge because the creation (man, beast and angels) is utterly incapable of deciding or effecting its own destiny. Someone above the order of created beings must determine the course of history – only God can unfold this plan.

5 But one of the **elders** said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the **Lion of the tribe of Judah**, **the Root of David**, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Notice that it was one of the elders – not an angel or cherubim that comforted John –

And the elder proceeds to tell John that One was found – worthy to open the scrolls.

And here the elder uses several Old Testament titles referring to Jesus Christ.

Lion of the Tribe of Judah – Turn with me to genesis 49

Jacob is in his death bed – and he tells his sons what is going to become of them.

Look at verse 8

[Gen 49:8-10 NKJV] 8 "Judah, you [are he] whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand [shall be] on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you. (this was a prophecy of how the kings of Israel would come from the tribe of Judah.) **9 Judah [is] a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him [shall be] the obedience of the people.**

From these words, the Jewish people have always understood that the Messiah would be of the tribe of Judah – as indeed Jesus was.

It was from this as well, that the Tribe of Judah took the symbol of the lion as their emblem.

The lion is the king of beasts and in the ancient world stood as a symbol for kings; for majesty, power, sovereignty, and rule.

Root of David

Turn now to Isaiah 11

[Isa 11:1, 10 NKJV] 1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ... 10 "And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

Jesse was the father of David.

So, the prophecy here in Isaiah is that the Messiah would come from the family of David, with David and Jesse being at the root of the family tree.

But here Jesus is actually the “root” of David.

Why?

Because, Jesus is the One who has existed since eternity past.

6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

The elder that comforted John told him behold the Lion of Judah is worthy to open the scroll.

John looks up – as he had been crying, thinking he is going to see a mighty lion – and he sees a lamb.

Turn with me to John 1

[Jhn 1:35-37 NKJV] 35 Again, the next day, John (John the Baptist) stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

Three years later, it was John who stood at the base of the cross and watched the blood flow from Jesus' wounds and heard Him say "It is finished"

So John's seen this lamb before.

The word that is used here for lamb is the word for a little lamb or a delicate lamb.

And this lamb had wounds on it (it had the appearance that it had been slain) there were marks of a previous sacrifice upon Him – but did you notice that the lamb was not lying down – it was standing.

Church, I think you could make the case that Jesus will still have nail-pierced hands and a wounded side when we see Him in heaven.

These are going to be forever reminders of the price that He's paid for us.

There is another reason why we see the wounded lamb here in chapter five -

The coming judgment beginning in chapter six is dictated and administrated by the Lamb who already offered an escape from judgment by taking judgment upon Himself. The judgment will come upon a world that hates the Lamb and all He stands for, and rejects His offer of escape.

I had you make a note of the seven eyes and the seven horns – sounds frightening.

However, I did tell you before that just because it states the number seven – it doesn't mean that the quantity is seven.

So John most likely didn't see a seven eyed lamb with seven horns.

Seven is the number of perfection or completeness.

And we saw in our study last week that eyes is an indicator of knowledge or wisdom

While horns is attributed to power.

So the wounded little lamb has the marks of being Omniscience (All knowing) and Omnipotence (All Powerful)

The eyes are the 7 spirits of God sent into all the Earth, because Jesus is also omnipresent

The Bottom line is this: Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is both 100% God & 100% Man.

7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Because Jesus is worthy – because He is everlasting God, He alone is able to take the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father

8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

When the Lamb took the scroll, the response was immediate. High-ranking angels and redeemed man joined to worship the Lamb.

The falling down here is the act of placing your face against the floor.

During the old days when a king had lost, he would fall down before the victorious king in sign of complete surrender – he would be at his mercy.

This is what true worship is.

We think that worship is simply about singing to Him – it is about complete surrender to Him and His will.

Worship should bring us to our knees and proclaim – Thy will be done not my will be done.

Now, it also says that the elders had harps – and I guess that is where many people get the idea that we are going to be playing the harp in heaven all the time.

But the word that is used here for harp – is the word we get our word guitar.

So we may be playing guitars in heaven instead.

And then it also says that the saint had these golden bowls of incense which were the prayers of the saints.

Now, the concept of incense and prayer were a part of the worship at the Tabernacle and the Temple.

Inside the “holy place” there was an “altar of incense” where the priests would burn incense in the morning and in the evening. (Ex. 30:7-8)

The incense was a special formula, made up of various spices.

There was a beautiful fragrance to the incense.

When we learn to pray correctly, according to the correct “formula”, then prayer is a beautiful thing. It’s a sweet smelling aroma.

When we are praying incorrectly – for selfish reasons, complaining, and doubting – then our prayers aren’t so sweet.

The elders here are symbolically presenting the prayers of the saints – they are in no interceding or acting as a mediator between the saints and God.

In 1 Timothy 2:5, there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth."

At the end of our study last week, we saw the elders and the cherubim singing in worship – singing a song with the emphasis on God’s work of creation.

Here, this new song, the emphasis is no longer on His creation but His redemption.

Look at that song.

Look at the lyrics of that song. Who is singing it?

Who can sing this to Jesus Christ?

Only the church can sing that song.

The church is the one that was redeemed and purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ

That means that only the elders are singing this song.

Why?

Because nowhere in scripture do we find any reference to the redemption of angels.

Jesus Christ didn't die for angels – He died for man.

Turn with me to Ephesians 3

[Eph 3:8-11 NKJV] 8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what [is] the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly [places], 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

As believers, our lives are being studied by angels.

Our redemption, Christ's transformation in us, how we respond to God's grace – angels are taking notes.

Let's look a little closer at the song that the elders sang.

The song honors the price of redemption: for You were slain.

- The song honors the worker of redemption: have redeemed us.
- The song honors the destination of redemption: have redeemed us to God.
- The song honors the payment of redemption: by Your blood.
- The song honors the scope of redemption: every tribe and tongue and people and nation.
- The song honors the length of redemption: have made us kings and priests to our God.
- The song honors the result of redemption: and we shall reign on the earth.

Church, we are destined to reign with Christ when He comes again.

Rev. 20 says that we will be the instruments by which Christ's rule during the Millennium is carried out around the world.

Remember Jesus' promise in Rev 2:26

He who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—He shall rule them with a rod of iron ...

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, 12 saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" 13 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, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power [Be] to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"

Every created thing joins in the chorus to give worship to God the Father (who sits on the throne) and to Jesus (the Lamb)

This combined worship of the Father and the Lamb is strong testimony to the deity of Jesus. "There cannot be the slightest doubt that the Lamb is to be reckoned with God and as God."

14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

The response to the Lamb taking a hold of the scroll is nonstop worship to the One that deserves worship.

To the One Eternal God

To the One on the throne

Who alone is holy and worthy

God gave this revelation to John during a time when the church was being persecuted severely.

And as John sees all of this in heaven, he must have been encouraged in realizing that God was currently and forever be on the throne.

Amen

Let's pray...

