

Corresponds to Program 17

THE SEALED BOOK - PART 1 STUDY GUIDE

OPENING THE BOOK

Revelation 5:1-5

As we begin our study of the seals of Revelation, we are first shown a picture of the Lord sitting on His throne, holding a scroll which has writing on both sides. That indicates completeness or fullness of content for what is written. We can better understand this chapter when we look at it in three sections. The first is about a problem over which John is weeping. The second is about the solution to the problem, and the third shows the reaction of the rest of the universe who are observing this drama being played out.

The Scroll is sealed up with seven seals. John is seeing this vision, and weeps because no one can open the seals. The writings are a history and destiny of mankind.

The Sealed Book

We have another glimpse of what is in the scroll from the book of Ezekiel:

“Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book was in it. Then He spread it before me; and there was writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it were lamentations and mourning and woe” (Ezekiel 2:9-10).

Since the fall, the experience of man has been one of lamentation, mourning, and woe.

The New Testament says, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

One of the elders around the throne tells John not to weep, for all is not hopeless. Someone is able to open the seals, and show what is written, and what will ultimately transpire. The

Root of David will open the seals! Who is this Root? It is Jesus Christ, the descendant of David. Jesus is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5).

This scroll represents a very important document or title deed. According to the law in Old Testament times, title deeds containing the evidence of ownership, such as property ownership, were sealed in this way (see Jeremiah 32:9-11). The scroll, in the hand of Him who sits on the throne, definitely represents such a title deed, but to what? John’s reaction to the angel’s proclamation that no man can open the sealed scroll offers an intimation.



“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.”

REVELATION 5:1

John weeps much. Why? Because this sealed scroll is the title deed to the earth. It contains a description of the history and destiny of all earth’s inhabitants. This is why there is writing “inside and on the back” (Revelation 5:1).

Inside this scroll is sealed the destiny of every person and nation. What is our destiny? All peoples are guilty—found wanting—“for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin” (Romans 3:9).

This is because, “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” and the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 3:23; 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

KEY SCRIPTURES

Revelation 5:1-5 SEVEN SEALED SCROLL

Ezekiel 2:10 LAMENTATIONS AND MOURNING

Romans 3:23 ALL HAVE SINNED

Romans 6:23 WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH

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. “I’ve come from earth,” is his answer. “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 Satan as the “prince” of this world (see John 12:31).

Salvation in the Lamb

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 that terrible fact. 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” would refer to those who are presently in heaven, such as Enoch, who had such a close walk with the Lord that God took him directly to heaven without seeing death (see 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 in the earth today, no matter how good, holy or powerful he may seem, can redeem us from sin.

No man “under the earth” means those who lie in the grave. The Bible says the saints are buried, such as David, for example. They have not yet “ascended” to heaven but still rest in the grave (see Acts 2:29, 34). And though David was a man after God’s own heart, he cannot redeem the race from the sin problem.

Recognizing that we cannot save ourselves from sin—under-

standing that no mere human being can remedy our personal guilt and lostness—is the first step on the wonderful journey of salvation. As John realizes the hopelessness of the human race, he is comforted with the words, “Weep not”.

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.

Look on as the elder encourages us to “behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David,” who has “prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” (Revelation 5:5 KJV).

When John looks he beholds a “Lamb as it had been slain” (Revelation 5:6).

The price of redemption is brought to view when these two descriptions are placed side by side. Jesus Christ, the “Lion of the tribe of Judah,” King of the universe, one with God, Creator of all things, took the form of a man, was made “a little lower than the angels” He created. He humbled Himself to become a man, in the likeness of sinful flesh (see Psalm 8:5; Philippians 2:5-8; Romans 8:3).

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 altered. The words, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) are now written against the nations and individuals recorded there. Hope, comfort, and a message of good tidings of great joy for all people is about to be proclaimed.

Although the world does not acknowledge it, Christ has, at an infinite cost, purchased the human race. He holds our new life ready to be born as we accept it in Him. He holds a just claim to every human being, not only by creation but by redemption. He has, by His own blood, signed the emancipation papers of every slave to sin. Alleluia! Amen. ★