

REVELATION – SERMON 29

THE LAMB WHO IS WORTHY

Revelation 5:1-7

INTRODUCTION

- Many unbelievers like to use calamities and tragic events as proof that God does not exist, or that God is not in control.
- The modern day heathen repeat the words of the ancient heathen: “Where is now their God?” (Psalm 115:2)
- The answer is, and always will be: “But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.” (Psalm 115:3)
- In Revelation 4-5 the key word is “throne”. The key Person is “him that sitteth upon the throne”.
- It is good for us to be constantly reminded that God as King sits upon his throne; that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.
- For the child of God, this truth is a great comfort (Matthew 10:29-31)
- For the ungodly, it is a warning (Psalm 2:10-12)
- The people of this world, if they have a view of God at all, have a *flawed* view of God.
- These chapters help us to have proper views of God.
- Chapter 4 in describing the majestic brilliance of God on his throne, and the worship of the beasts and the elders around him, sets the scene for what is about to take place in chapter 5.

- All the angelic hosts as well as all the redeemed are assembled in the court of heaven to witness a ceremony.
- The producing of the scroll, the proclamation of the angel and the presentation of Christ all form part of a coronation ceremony where Christ is recognised as the rightful King of heaven and earth, and which concludes with universal worship being rendered unto him.
- While Christ is exalted as King in heaven at that point, it is not until seven years later that he claims his throne at Jerusalem and begins his 1000 year reign (Revelation 19:11-16)
- The apostle John not only has an eye-witness view of this ceremony, but has an active involvement in it.
- While the chief focus in chapter 4 is God the Father, the chief focus in chapter 5 is God the Son. Here he is shown as the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb that was slain.
- Here he is the King, the Redeemer, the Almighty, the Victor, the One who is worthy to execute universal rule and to receive universal worship.

I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE TESTAMENTAL SCROLL (1-3)

A. Its location

1. In God's right hand – the hand of power and favour
2. Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Psalm 110:1; Hebrews 1:3)

B. Its appearance

1. This was most likely a rolled papyrus scroll
2. Written inside and outside (cf. Ezekiel 2:10)

- a. These usually only were written on the inside
 - b. It was so full of words, that both sides were used
3. Sealed with seven seals
- a. Under Roman law, a will was required to be sealed seven times
 - b. These seals were applied in such a way as to be opened consecutively as the scroll was opened

C. Its significance

1. In Jeremiah 32, the prophet purchased a field from his cousin, and sealed the title deed and stowed it away until the land was freed from captivity
2. In a similar way, Christ has paid the full price of redemption, and has the right to claim what is his, there is a period of time between the payment and the possession
3. The scroll has been called the “title deed to the earth”
 - a. God gave Adam dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8:6)
 - b. He relinquished this to Satan (Genesis 3; Matthew 4:8-9; 2 Corinthians 4:4)
 - c. At Calvary, Christ defeated Satan and now has the right to reclaim the world to himself (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14)
 - d. Following the Rapture, Christ will take back this “title deed”, opening the seals of judgment upon earth, before finally taking his throne

4. The scroll records and unleashes the awful judgments upon the earth as each seal is opened
5. It is also the prophetic revelation of future events that, in Daniel's time, were "sealed till the time of the end" (Daniel 12:9)
6. It is the completion of God's redemptive plan for man and creation; the consummation of all history

D. Its unattainability

1. The strong, herald angel may have been Gabriel, who gave Daniel the visions that were sealed up (Daniel 9:21)
2. The greatest saints throughout history are not worthy
3. The most powerful kings throughout history are not worthy
4. Even this strong angel could not open the scroll

II. THE ANGUISH OF THE TEARFUL SAINT (4)

A. John follows a long line of godly men who wept in longing to see God's righteous kingdom established

1. David wept to see God's law continually broken (Psalm 119:136)
2. Jeremiah wept for his sinful people (Jeremiah 13:17)
3. Jesus wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-42)
4. Paul wept as he preached (Acts 20:31)

B. If the book remained sealed...

1. The curse of sin must remain

2. The redemptive plan of God could not be accomplished
3. The promises given through all the prophets must fail
4. Sin, Satan and the world cannot be defeated
5. The kingdom of Christ cannot be established

III. THE ASCENDANCE OF THE TRIUMPHANT SAVIOUR (5-7)

A. He is the Lion of the tribe of Juda

1. This describes Christ's kingly office
2. It refers to Jacob's prophecy that Israel's Messiah would come from Judah (Genesis 49:9-12)

B. He is the Root of David

1. This shows his legal right as a royal descendant of David (Isaiah 11:1,10; Jeremiah 23:5; Romans 1:3; Revelation 22:16)
2. It also shows his eternality, for though Christ is David's Son, he also pre-existed him as his "root"

C. He is in the midst of the throne, the four beasts, and the elders

1. In heaven, Christ occupies a central position
2. There, as perfect God and perfect Man, he ever lives to intercede for his people (Hebrews 7:25)

D. He is the Lamb

1. The Greek for "lamb" is a diminutive form of the word, indicating a young or small lamb

2. This emphasises that the Lamb's life was cut short (Isaiah 53:7-8)
 3. In heaven, he bears the marks of his suffering
 - a. Christ's scars will be an eternal reminder of the price that was paid for our redemption
 - b. The Chinese character for "righteousness" is a compound of the character for I/me at the bottom, and the character for lamb at the top
 4. The seven horns denote his omnipotence (Matthew 28:18)
 5. The seven eyes denote his omniscience
 - a. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7)
 - b. The Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:14)
- E. He has prevailed to open the book and loose the seals
1. Through his perfect life, atoning death, victorious resurrection and glorious ascension, Christ has defeated Satan and is now worthy to take the book
 2. The worthiness of Christ is tied to his work of *redemption*, which is a predominant theme in this chapter
 3. Daniel saw a similar vision of the Son receiving the kingdom from the Father (Daniel 7:13-14)

CONCLUSION

1. The apostle "wept much" when he thought the scroll could not be opened

2. Do you weep over your own sins, the sins of others; for a Christless world, and for his kingdom to come?
3. At present, and during the tribulation, the devil and the heathen set themselves against the Lord, and against his anointed (Psalm 2:1-3)
4. Yet this is “a vain thing”, and Christ *will* have his inheritance (Psalm 2:8)
5. The Lord Jesus is both a Lamb and a Lion
6. To those who repent and by faith receive him as their Lord, he is the Lamb who takes away their sin
7. But to those who refuse him, he is the Lion who will judge them without mercy
8. Which is he to you?