

### 13. The Search for Someone to Open the Scroll

In our last topic, we saw that the entire Trinity will receive our worship as we stand before the throne of God. We saw that the Lord is worthy to receive all worship, because He is the Creator of all things, and by Him all things exist. In our topic today, we are going to see what happens as a search is made for someone to open the scroll.

In Revelation 5:1-3, we read, “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. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?’ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.” In the Old Testament, contracts were written out on a scroll. These contracts could be for many different things such as marriage, wills, lease agreements, and especially in the Old Testament, the redemption of land by the owner. Ruth 4:4-5 talks about such a redemption of land when those verses say, “And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.’ And he said, ‘I will redeem *it*.’ Then Boaz said, ‘On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.’”

In the time of the New Testament, the Romans sealed their wills with seven seals. This scroll with seven seals is in heaven, but we are going to see that it is the title or deed to the earth. This scroll needed someone who was qualified to open the seals. In the case of Ruth, the close relative had to be both willing to redeem the land and able to redeem the land. The book of Ruth shows that the closest relative was unwilling to redeem the land, because he did not want to mar his inheritance. Ruth 4:6 says, “And the close relative said, ‘I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*.’” Here, in Revelation, we see that a strong angel asked a very important question, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” We will see that the seals on the scroll describe the various judgments that must come on the earth before the rule of God will be reestablished over the entire universe which has been marred by the consequences of sin.

The angel was looking for someone who was worthy to open the scroll. This meant that the person had to be both qualified and willing to open the scroll. John saw what happened when the strong angel asked this question. At first, it seemed like there was no one in heaven, on the earth, or anywhere in the entire creation that was qualified to open the seals of the scroll and look at what was written on the scroll. We see the reaction of John when it seemed that no one was qualified to break the seals and open the scroll. Revelation 5:4-5 says, “So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. 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.” John was filled with sorrow and wept a great amount when it seemed that no one could be found who could open the scroll. No one was even able to see (gaze upon or to have the power to understand) the scroll.

In fact, to John it seemed that there were three things that no one could do. He thought no one was worthy to open the scroll, to read the scroll or even to look at the scroll with understanding. Suddenly one of the elders that was seated around the throne spoke to John. This elder told John not to cry or weep. He told John that there was One who could take the scroll, open it and read what was written on the scroll. The elder used two Old Testament names to describe the One who was able to open the seals. The first name given was “the Lion of the tribe of Judah”. In Genesis 49, Jacob gathered His sons together to tell them what was going to happen in the last days. Then, he spoke about each of his sons.

In Genesis 49:8-10, we read, “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. 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? 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.” Instead, we have the first reference to the fact that one of Judah’s descendants will rule in the future. We also see that this descendent is described as a lion. Christ is the One who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The second name is the Root of David. David was promised that one of his descendants would sit on the throne forever. Revelation 22:16 says, “I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.” Here, we see that Jesus is identified as the One who is the Root of David. He is the One who will fulfill all of the promises that God gave to David about the descendent that would come from his family. These passages make it clear that the One who is able to open the scroll is Christ. We will also see that Christ was willing to open the scroll.

We go on to read, in Revelation 5:6-7, “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. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.” Here, we see that John turned, and looked, and saw a lamb in the middle of the throne, the four living creatures and the elders.

The word translated “lamb” was the word for a little pet lamb. In Exodus 12:3 and 6, we read, “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household...Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” Here, we see that the Jews were to have the lamb for four days before it became the lamb for the Passover. Then, Isaiah 53:7 says, “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.” John the Baptist introduced Jesus in John 1:29, by saying, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” Christ is our Passover Lamb.

The Jews also offered a lamb each year on the Day of Atonement as a covering for sin. Hebrews 9:11-15 says, “But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” When John turned, He saw that the Lion of the tribe of Judah is also the Lamb of God who paid the penalty once for all to become the Mediator of a new covenant.

We see that the Lamb of God had seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God. Isaiah 11:1-4 says, “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.” In the Bible, seven is the number of completeness or perfection and “horns” always speak of power. Christ has been given all authority. His eyes speak of the fact that He sees and knows all things. From these verses, in Isaiah, we see that Christ has the Spirit of the Lord on Him, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of Counsel, the Spirit of might, the Spirit of knowledge and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord.

We also see that Christ will judge the earth in righteousness and destroy the wicked. The seven seals in Revelation are judgments that will come upon the earth to destroy the wicked. That is why we read that the Lamb came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. Once the Christians are taken to heaven the antichrist will be revealed to lead the rebellion of the earth against God. 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8 says, “For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains *will do so* until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.” This rebellion will be judged through these judgments as a part of redeeming the earth from the consequences of sin. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain to others why this judgment is necessary. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain these things.