

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

“The Seven-Sealed Book”

Revelation 5:1-7

Introduction

1. The Throne of God is the focus of chapter four. The Actor associated with the Throne, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the focus of chapter five.

2. The unbelievable arrangement on, around, out of, and before the Throne presented a moving spectacle (cf. Ezek. 1). That magnificent Throne got John’s attention with the following scenes:

1. SCENE ONE: The Sealed Book vv. 1-3

a. Observed v. 1

The preposition “in” is better rendered “upon” () for the book was actually offered by God for others to take. Being written (perfect passive participle) on both sides, it is called an opisthographic book (cf. Ezek. 2:10). It was a roll of writing, not a book with pages as we use. The diminutive for “book” () does not detract from its full writing indicating the whole counsel of God. Until the seals were broken, the book’s contents were kept secret. The number “seven” points to perfection of security. A will in Roman Law bore the seven seals of the seven witnesses. Apparently the seals were arranged so they could be opened successively.

b. Offered v. 2

An angel who had unusual strength () offered the book by proclamation (present active participle) with a loud voice. There is only one archangel in Scripture (Jude 9), but several orders of angelic hosts (cf. Eph. 1:21). This strong one was one of them. His loud voice penetrated the utmost reaches of the universe (v. 3). Two questions are asked. The two verbs “open” and “loose” are an example of husterion - proterion since the loosing of the seals follows the opening of the book. They are separate actions, but inverted.

c. Unclaimed v. 3

Not a single creation of God (Greek “no one”) could be located who had proven worth by rank, character, and ability to open the book and loose its seals. The three areas which are named include: 1) Dwelling place of God (in heaven). 2) Dwelling place of man (upon earth). 3) Dwelling place of all other intelligent beings (under earth). Therefore, the challenge of the strong angel is unanswered.

2. SCENE TWO: The Weeping Apostle vv. 4, 5

a. The Cause for Weeping v. 4

The emphatic pronoun “I” (found in the TR) shows that John was really touched with what he had seen of the inability of the entire universe. Moreover, the imperfect tense () states John was overwhelmed with tears and the verb connotes open lament.

Note: No one was found worthy to: 1. open (v. 2), 2. read (v. 4, TR), 3. look (v. 4) at the seven-sealed book, hence John wailed.

b. The Rebuke for Weeping v. 5

The one of (i.e. “out of”) the elders who is mentioned is representative of the redeemed previously mentioned (4:4, 9-11). The present negative imperative commands John to stop his weeping (). There are two reasons for this admonition:-

1) An Identification The Lord is viewed by two figures:

a. Lion Coming from the tribe of Judah, this is likely reference to the O.T. (Gen. 49:9). Some day this blessed One will roar out of Zion to fulfill God’s purpose for Israel (Ro. 11:26).

b. Root Associated with David, the Lord’s royalty is proclaimed. Consider that Moses stands for law, Abraham for promise, and David for kingdom. Lion and Root connote the Lord’s claim to triumph.

2) An Evaluation

The aorist form of the verb () affirms historicity of the event. The Lord qualifies to open the book and seals. He alone has the title deed to the universe (cf. Jer. 32:1-15). He is the rightful heir, worthy to take possession, and worthy to subject all to Himself. He is by right, title, and person the only Sovereign of the universe. Hallelujah!

3. SCENE THREE: The Vision of the Lamb vv. 6, 7

a. His Position v. 6

The concentric circles of elders, rainbow, living ones, and angels surrounded the Lord as He stood “in the midst” of the Throne. That is the position which belongs to Him alone -- central to our vision (cf. 1:13).

b. His Condition v. 6

1) As a Lamb slain. John was told about a Lion/Root, but behold (imperative), he saw the Lamb (, a small pet Lamb cf. , Jn. 1:29, 36). This diminutive form is used 28 times in Revelation. Calvary is treasured in heaven. The memories of earth are in heaven. The perfect passive verb, “slain” is found only in 1 John (3:12) and Revelation (5:6, 9, 12; 6:4, 9; 13:3; 18:2) in the N.T.

2) As a Lamb standing The perfect tense verb () shows that this is His eternal position. His patient sitting is over (cf. Heb. 1:3; Ps. 110:1). He stands to reign in power and glory. The long awaited governmental rule of our God has come.

3) As a Lamb possessed Three features are singled to show His glory and Person. a) Seven horns evidence His omnipotence. b) Seven spirits indicate His fullness of control which extends to every corner of the universe (omnipresence).

c. His Action v. 7

With artless simplicity, the account is God-like. There is no fanfare. All is plain. The verb “took” is perfect active () to show that the Lord’s title to the book is forever. In brief, John says “look, the Lion/Root/Lamb has taken the book.” The property owner has come! The Lamb is distinguished from the Father on the Throne, yet the inexplicable details of the Trinity are preserved.

Conclusion The Lord was born King (Mt. 2:2). He does not assume His full experience of this right until now. The investiture of the King of Kings is extrapolated for the believer here. Oh, thank God, there is a future for the Son of God which is universal. The truth of this is taught in the Word right here. May God help each believing heart to rejoice in such a Saviour. If you are not a believer on Christ, become one today by an act of your own will and heart. Amen.