

Vision of the Throne (Cont)

by Denis Lyle

The sermon emphasizes the worthiness of Jesus Christ to rule the world and redeem humanity, based on His right of creation, His right of Calvary, and His right of conquest.

Scripture: Genesis 22:7, Luke 2:14, John 1:29, Philippians 2:9, Revelation 5:1-9

Topics: "End Time Judgment", "Redemption Through Christ"

Description

Denis Lyle preaches about humanity's longing for Utopia, tracing back to ancient times, and the various futile attempts to achieve it through human reason, economic reforms, and leadership. The sermon delves into the revelation in Chapter 5 of the book of Revelation, highlighting the significance of the scroll with seven seals held by God, symbolizing the title deed to the earth and the impending end-time judgments. It emphasizes the inability of any human to open the scroll, leading to John's distress until the Lion-Lamb, Jesus Christ, is revealed as the only worthy one to execute God's plan for redemption and peace on earth.

Transcript

There is nothing new about humanity's longing for Utopia. This wistful desire for a place where there is no war, no poverty, no hunger, no hatred and no sorrow is the most universal and enduring passion of mankind. Utopian literature can be traced back as far as Plato around 400 B.C. and Euhemerus around 300 B.C. Some utopian dreamers have placed their hope in human reason as the cure for social evils, while others have suggested that the road to Utopia lies in reforming our economy. A writer in a popular magazine once described what she thought a perfect world would be like:

"No housework: no drug abuse: no prejudice a relationship that works: more time with our families: a decent education for all: clean air and water: a birth control pill for men: a care really built for families: health, no aids: happiness, no war: and the Pursuit of a family-friendly workplace"

That according to this writer would be a perfect world. Clearly she does not expect God to have very much to do with bringing this perfect world about. For there is only one hope for a utopian society: the person whose Birth was heralded some 2,000 years ago with the words, "And on earth peace, good will toward men". (Lk 2:14) As we come to

(ch 5)chapter we find that we stand at the brink of the realisation of mankind's most elusive dream. And as we shall see, this dream is destined to be fulfilled... not by economic reforms, human reason, or protest marches, but by the sovereign authority and dominion of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

" Chapter 5 of the book of Revelation continues the vision of the throne of heaven in the preceding chapter. John is now introduced to an item of central importance, namely a book which contains the prophecy of impending events to be unfolded in the Book of Revelation. The book is actually a scroll (Greek, *biblion*), which is given prominence in the scene by the fact that it is in the right hand of God who is on the throne. The importance and comprehensive character of the revelation contained is indicated by the fact that the book is written on both sides of the parchment.

Further the document is made impressive by seven seals, apparently fixed on the edges of the scroll in such a way that the seals must be successively broken if the scroll is to be unrolled and read. Stauffer observes that the Roman law required a will to be sealed seven times as illustrated in the wills left by Augustus and Vespasian for their successors". 1

In the previous chapter, John was caught up into heaven where he saw the Throne of God and the Court of Heaven. In (ch 5) the scene is still in heaven, but the THEME changes. In (ch 4) the song in heaven is all about CREATION, while in (ch 5) the song in heaven is all about REDEMPTION. Up to this point there has been no sign of the Lamb, but He becomes the centre of everything. Our Lord steps into the spotlight and fills the stage of the universe, drawing every eye and prompting endless applause.

(1) THE TRAGIC WEAKNESS OF CIVILIZATION A challenge is thrown out to all humanity: Who of all God's creatures is fit to rule the world Who has the right to the title deed of the earth Who is capable of leading us toward the solutions for our problems Who is smart enough Moral enough Strong enough Who is worthy The question lingers in the air of heaven like an accusation. No one steps forth. Throughout human history there have been those who considered themselves worthy to "break the seals", to "open the scroll", to carve out a man made Utopia on earth.

But even the best and most heroic leaders in history have not proven worthy to "break the seals", to "open the scroll", and to bring about a world of peace. Who, then of all God's creatures is fit to rule the world Our attention is drawn to: (a) THE SCROLL: " A book", (5:1) literally it means a scroll. (1) THE SOURCE OF IT: John says, "And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals". (5:1) This book is held tightly by God's omnipotent fist indicating ITS DIVINE SOURCE and that it is God's to give to whomever He pleases.

This is uniquely God's Book. (2) THE IMPORTANCE OF IT: This scroll is written on both sides... front and back. Now the ancients hardly ever wrote on both sides of a scroll. Usually one side was for writing, while the back side was a rough, outer cover. Writing on both sides symbolised that message was full to overflowing, detailed, and extremely important. The mere fact that it is written down as opposed to being spoken indicates that it is unalterable, settled, and determined by God alone.

In ancient times a scroll, like a Roman will was sealed by placing a single seal on the outer edge. But THIS scroll has seven seals one on the outside and six more on the inside. In other words, the scroll was partially rolled and then sealed, rolled some more and then sealed, rolled again and then sealed, until the seventh seal sealed the entire scroll. This is a closed book, shut by seven seals, making it impossible for any man to open it, read it and then execute it's contents. (3) THE MEANING OF IT: I believe this scroll, which some find so mysterious is "the title deed to the earth". 2 This is the official document that will determine the outcome of human history.

In this book are the final, end-time, cataclysmic judgements of God that will be poured out upon the earth during the Great tribulation. The One who possesses this book and can break its seals possesses the right

to rule the world. Now bearing in mind that much of the symbolism of Revelation must be interpreted in the light of the Old Testament, there is an incident in the life of Jeremiah that throws some light on this passage. (Jer 32:6-15) Jeremiah was warned by God that Israel would be captured by the Babylonians and the people would be in captivity for 70 years.

But God also tells the prophet to purchase a piece of land in Israel as a symbolic act, that some day they will retake possession of their land. So what happens Jeremiah buys a plot of land from his cousin. "And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that was in ANathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances". (Jer 32:9,10) That is to say, Jeremiah wrote an agreement, then got witnesses, then sealed it so that there could be no tampering with it.

There were actually two parts to this written agreement. One was given to a witness as a matter of public record, and the other was stored in a clay jar for safe keeping. This is the method God's people had for documenting purchases, and it is illustrative for the scroll in (Rev 5) For this book in the hand of God is a document redeeming the world. It is a sealed scroll, a legal document, belonging to the one who has paid the price and therefore has the legal right to open it and reveal what is written within.

It is the title deed to the earth. (Lk 21:28 Rom 8:21) Now the very context in (Rev 5) proves this. In (5:2) the call goes forth for an applicant to come and take the scroll. John wept because no MAN was found worthy to do so. The SPHERE OF MAN is evidently in view. Then again, when the seals on the scroll are eventually broken, disasters overtake the EARTH. We read (6:2) "And he went forth conquering and to conquer". Where did he go forth to conquer The EARTH. (6:5 7-8 12-15) This book has something to do with the judgments of God that are yet to come on the EARTH. (Ezek 2:9-10 Dan 12:1-4) This world is spinning through space, headed toward a final, cataclysmic judgment.

Have we forgotten that the Wrath of God is presently boiling over and one day will be unleashed on this ungodly world! In the end, Heaven will prove to be triumphant over the earth. This Judgement during the Tribulation is written by God in His sacred scroll, already divinely ordained and predestined to occur. And the right to rule the earth is now to be decided at the Throne of God once and for all. (b) THE SEARCH: A challenge is thrown out: Who has the right to the title deed to the earth Who has paid the price to redeem it and can legally open those seals Noone answers.

There is no one on earth, in heaven, or in hell who is worthy of opening it. Who is capable of solving our problems Who is competent to bring human history to its appointed end Who is qualified to overturn evil and make right all human injustices Who is fit to punish all wrong and reward right The question was not "WHO IS WILLING" but "WHO IS WORTHY History is littered with fallen conquerors and their shattered dreams of a man made Utopia: Alexander the Great: Julius Caesar: Germany's Hitler, who envisioned a world-wide Reich that would last a thousand years: Iraq'a Saddam Hussein who vowed to liberate the Islamic Holy Places in Jerusalem and Mecca and who dreamed of uniting the entire Moslem world from North Africa to Asia under his rule.

" WHO IS WORTHY" No one in Washington has the answers. No one in Moscow. No one in London, Baghdad, Tel Aviv, or Tokyo can deliver us from our problems. No one can execute Gods plan for human history. We are hopeless and helpless to usher in the Golden Age. Our problems are beyond us. No wonder John wept. His troubled heart was filled with deep distress. (c) THE SOB: Why does John weep (5:4)Because he knows that this world needs REDEMPTION. The world needs a leader and the scroll

must be opened and the seals broken for Gods purpose's to be fulfilled.

John's tears represent the weeping of all God's people down through the centuries. These are our tears longing for God to make a disordered world right. But John says in (5:5) " And of the elders saith unto me weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda the Root of David hath prevailed to open the book and to loose ther seven seals thereof". This messenger sees beyond John's limited human perspective to Gods eternal solution. (2) THE TRIUMPHANT WORTHINESS OF CHRIST John is told not to cry: there is good news.

Someone has been found who can open that scroll and read it. Someone is worthy and has paid the price to redeem the world. The only solution that exists to the human dilemma is our Lord Jesus Christ. (a) THE PERSON OF OUR LORD: " Behold the lion... "(5:5)This is THE MAJESTY OF THE LORD JESUS: Like a lion... ferocious: courageous: fearless: kingly: mighty: majestic. This Lion of Judah is Jesus Christ. For He alone is able to break the seals: open the scroll and execute its events.

"Of the tribe of Juda ..". This is THE ROYALTY OF THE LORD JESUS: the tribe of Judah was the tribe of David from which the kingly line proceeded. (Gen 49:9-10) It was to this tribe that the promise was given of a Son whose throne and kingdom would would endure forever. (2 Sam 7:13-16) " The root of David... "This is THE ETERNALITY OF THE LORD JESUS: For He who cane AFTER David as the offspring of David was also BEFORE David as the root.(22:16) This points to Christ's eternal perexistence.

"Hath prevailed... "This is THE VICTORY OF THE LORD JESUS: For this regal Lion... eternal: divine: yet completely human won the VICTORY AT CALVARY in order to open this scroll. (b) THE POSITION OF OUR LORD: How could John have ever missed Him There He was, in the midst all the time. (5:6) Perhaps John did not notice him at first because he was struck by the beauty of the rainbow, or he was amazed at the story of the scroll, but somehow John failed to recognise the Saviour. Yet the Lamb was in the midst of it all. (Matt 18:20 In the midst of all these events is the Lamb of God.

He is central to everything in the Book of Revelation. (c) THE PASSION OF OUR LORD: He turns to see A LION, but instead he saw A LAMB. John must have wondered, " This is the solution to the world's problems A lowly lamb A weak, submissive lamb". Precisely. The answer to mans problems is the Lamb of God... Jesus Christ. The Lion-Lamb. The Sovereign Saviour. What a combination of meekness and majesty. Now there are two very interesting words is. The first is "Lamb". In Greek there are two words for Lamb.

One describes a lamb in general. (amnos) the other means a pet lamb. (arnion) Satan is decribed as a dragon (12:9) with his hordes of mighty demons supporting him, but God is so powerful that all he requires to defeat Satan is a little pet lamb. The second interesting word here is "slain". (sphazo)" It means to cut up and mutilate an animal sacrifice. It describes the gory crucifixion of our Lord Jesus. Thorns pierced His skull. A whip lacerated His back. Fists bruised His face.

Nails gouged His hands. A spear tore His side. Blood and water came gushing out". 3 And now in Heaven the marks of our Lord's death are still there, imprinted in His resurrected body for all eternity. But John discovers even something more strange. For this Lamb, who was violently slaughtered and put to death, is actually STANDING. Having being killed, He is now alive AGAIN. (d) THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR LORD: Christ died with all the vestures of DEFEAT. A cross. A crown of thorns.

A jeering mob. A black sky. An agonising cry. But then came Sunday morning and with it the glorious report, "He is not here, but is RISEN". (Lk 24:6) "The head that once was crowned with crowns is crowned with glory now". John sees something else. "A Lamb having seven horns". (5:6) (e) THE POWER OF OUR LORD: In the Bible, an animals horns speak of its power to ram, butt, gore and defeat its enemies and seven is the number of perfection. Sevens horns means OMNIPOTENCE. The Lord Jesus will have no trouble opening the scroll and executing the seven seal judgments: (6:1 - 8:5) the seven trumpet judgments: (8:6 - 19:21) and the seven vial judgments: (16:1 - 19:21) for He is the omnipotent God.

John noted something else, "A Lamb having seven eyes". (5:6) (f) THE PERCEPTION OF OUR LORD: Gods Lamb is omniscient. Full of intelligence. Possessing perfect discernment. He has perfect knowledge of all things past, present, and future. This is one Lamb who can't have the wool pulled over His eyes. (Isa: 11:2-4) Look at what happens in this dramatic moment in Heaven. The Lamb came "and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne". (5:7) (g) THE PREROGATIVES OF OUR LORD: Suppose for a moment the question had been asked Christ, "What is the basis of Your claim to the title deed of earth" His reply could have been threefold.

He could have said, "That world is mine by RIGHT OF CREATION, for I made it: it is mine of by RIGHT OF CALVARY for I redeemed it: it is mine by RIGHT OF CONQUEST, for I'am going back to claim that world in war". As Christ steps into the spotlight His right is instantly owned. Now from the moment the Lamb is out into the picture, John cannot take his eyes off Him. He mentions Him again and again in this chapter. (5:6,8,12,13) He is the centrepiece of Heaven. "The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's land." (3) THE THRILLING WORSHIP OF CREATION Here is worship as it was meant to be, alive, dynamic, genuine, passionate. (a) THE SOURCE OF THIS WORSHIP: What we have in (Rev 5) are expanding circles of His worshippers.

Notice first the Lord Jesus is immediately worshipped by those AROUND THE THRONE. The four beasts and the twenty four elders. (5:8-10) Then Christ is worshipped throughtout ALL HEAVEN.(5:11-12) Finally He is worshipped throughout ALL THE UNIVERSE. (5:13-14) The creatures at the throne worship Him. The countless angel throng worship Him. The whole universe worship Him. (Phil 2:9-11) Because He is WORTHY to be Worshipped! (b) THE SUBJECT OF THIS WORSHIP: In (5:9) the elders SING: in (5:12) the angels SAY, but their theme is similar.

"Worthy is the Lamb". (5:12) Isaac once asked: "WHERE is the Lamb" (Gen 22:7) John the Baptist then answered: "BEHOLD the Lamb". (Jn 1:29) All creation now says: "WORTHY is the Lamb". (5:12) There are some denominations who have gone through their hymnals and taken out all the songs about the blood of Christ. But the reason He is worthy is because of Calvary. In (ch 4) the theme was, "Thou art worthy for Thou hast created". (4:11) But now the worship is lifted an octave higher.

"Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth". (5:9-10) Sir Robert Anderson says: "Eternity in the PAST knew no other future than Calvary's Cross: eternity in the future will know no other PAST than Calvary's Cross". In that bright scene of splendour, far beyond the skies, they worship Him.

They worship Him as the Lamb that was slain. Its Calvary that fills their vision and prompts their worship. Over yonder at this moment they are doing what we do when we worship Him when we spread the Table and remember Him. Christ is the centrepiece of Heaven. All heaven revolves around Him. Over yonder at

this very moment they are worshipping Him now. They are crying, " WORTHY IS THE LAMB". And what a day it will be when the church is taken home and all heaven breaks loose in worship. "Oh, that with yonder sacred throng, We at His feet may fall, Join in the everlasting song, And crown Him Lord of all."

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