

He prevailed to open the book

by Fred Tomlinson

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Scripture: Genesis 49:8, Isaiah 46:9, Revelation 5:5, Ephesians 1:11, Revelation 5:9, Revelation 14:3, Revelation 5:1

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Description

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Transcript

Well, it's good to be together again and we look to the Lord to speak to our hearts. I'm looking back into the book of Revelation, if you'd like to turn there with me. In the meeting last week we were looking into the fourth chapter and for those who were here and for those of you who are familiar with this section of scripture, you know that the prevailing conditions at the time that this vision was given to John were that the church was under heavy persecution and the apostle John was incarcerated on the isle of Patmos.

All his colleagues, that is all the other apostles by this time had been martyred for their faith in Jesus and I can't doubt in my own mind that there on that island the apostle John, despite of all of the great things that we can recall of his teaching, but surely he must have had questions. At the end of the day we're all human beings and these were terribly, terribly dangerous and troubling days and I think it would be quite reasonable to believe that there would be questions whether they were planted there by the enemy or whether they were just sort of his mind trying to rationally think through the challenges that were taking place. But it was in the midst of that kind of situation when God broke in on the apostle John and we remember reading in chapter 4 how that he saw a door and the door was opened and in some way that we can't explain or even begin to comprehend he was somehow catapulted in his spirit into the very presence of God, into heaven.

What an amazing thing that was. We made some reference last time to the question, was his body still there on the isle of Patmos? What were the precise conditions of his body immediately prior to this happening and so on? We don't know the answers to any of those questions. We only know what he has recorded here for us and as we are gathered today and as we read over these scriptures and try to understand more fully just what was going on at this time, what they all mean to us, I don't think any of us can even begin to pretend that we have experienced anything that really could realistically equate with what John is describing here as he is there on the isle of Patmos.

I don't think there is any doubt about that. Whatever great things we can share from our own personal stories of God visiting us and speaking to us in sometimes some quite remarkable and wonderful ways, but this was an outstanding event that took place and what John was exposed to was something so outside of the realm of this world. It is astonishing to even contemplate.

What we do have, by God's grace, is these words which are the words of John who was an eyewitness. He was there. He was the man and we know from reading right at the beginning of this book we call the Revelation that this was a revelation of Jesus Christ we are told and it was given to John for John but it was given to John in order that he could write them down.

He was told write these things down and then from there on he was to communicate the things which he had seen and heard which he had recorded and they were to be dispatched off to the churches and praise God that happened and how thankful we are today that through the passage of so many years, centuries upon centuries and through all kinds of challenging dramatic circumstances here we are today. We still live with dramatic and strange circumstances but here we are. We've got this book before us.

We've got them incorporated into the other writings which we know the Apostle Paul calls the inspired God-breathed Word of God and we have it here and we're blessed with that and of course we look to the Lord to minister to us by his Holy Spirit and to help us to understand what these things mean not merely what's recorded and what the recorded information means in and of itself but we pray. I trust you do. I know this is my prayer even coming before these scriptures during this week.

We come before God and we say Lord you need to reveal something to me. You need to breathe again now. You need to breathe into my heart and quicken these words so that I don't merely know and understand what is being talked about here but I need to know Lord what this may mean to me.

What is it that you Lord today are speaking into my heart and what response are you calling for from my heart and so as we continue on here I've got this question at the back of my mind which I've just mentioned and that is what does this mean to me today? What is God saying to me through this? We don't want merely some kind of academic analysis of the text. I'm not saying that's without value but there's something beyond that and that is that wonderful experience when God makes something live to us and makes it personal and so on. One of the factors which I believe we're all compelled to take away from these readings is the undeniable fact of God's absolute sovereignty, the sovereignty of God and to John I believe as he is exposed to this sovereign almighty God must have been just a staggering experience.

I don't know what words to use really but it was clearly just a breathtaking vision of God. He'd had great experiences walking with Jesus and listening to Jesus and fellowshiping with him and just being loved by Jesus and there had been all of the events at the close of his life, the cross and the resurrection and the days together after the resurrection. All of this was staggering in and of itself but this was on another level altogether for him as he is transported into the very presence of the Lord God almighty as he is referred to

here as the King of Kings.

We saw in that fourth chapter, let me just reread the last verse of the chapter where the elders are reaching out to him who sits on the throne and worship him as it says in verse 10, him who lives forever and ever and they will cast their crowns before the throne saying worthy are you our Lord and our God to receive glory and honour and power for you created all things and because of your will they existed and were created. Perhaps I should just, if I could just pull to one side a moment and just say I'm reading from the New American Standard Version. Someone contacted me just immediately before this meeting who's watching these messages on the internet and said could you please tell us which translation you're using.

So there you are. But in that verse of scripture we are learning that this one who is seated in the midst of this throne which is set in heaven is the Lord God almighty and specifically he is being referred to here as the creator, the creator of the universe or the universes. All that is created was created by him and in thinking of his sovereignty we're reminding ourselves that he presides over everything.

He is presiding over everything today, over everything. We hear talk these days about a one world government. Well the true one world government is centred around the throne which is set in heaven and the king who sits on that throne is the king of kings and he's presiding over everything no matter how things appear.

This is the truth and this is the kind of message that is being brought to John. There's the information, there's the observation, but the message that I believe God wants John to return back to earth with is a clear, clear understanding that God is sovereign. God is in control and I do believe that that's a message that God wants to impress on my heart in a fresh way and on your heart also and may the Lord enable us to listen to what this God is saying to us through his word and to actually build our lives on the reality of this great truth that God is completely sovereign.

Now then, thinking of John, if he, having seen these things and heard these things that we've read of in chapter 4, were to be somehow transported back to his incarcerated circumstances on the Isle of Patmos, he would go back with these staggering images etched into his memory and he would recall just the awesomeness of everything which he had seen and this powerful, enthroned, sovereign, creator God. This in and of itself would be material for some spectacular dreams I should think. It would be certainly material which he would be able to write about and which he would be able to communicate to others and send it to the saints on the mainland.

But perhaps if that was the extent of it, the very experience itself would raise perhaps an even bigger question than any questions he had before because on the one hand he's dealing with these precious saints of God, these believers in Jesus who are being persecuted in the most outrageous manner and yet the God they're worshipping is sitting in this place of peace and glory. This all-powerful, all-creating God. The question would be, well, why doesn't he interfere with the situation and change the circumstances? It had become obvious that he's capable of doing this.

So the question would be, well, why? Why not? But the fact of the matter is, as we reach the 11th verse in chapter 4, we have not reached the end of the vision. I remind you that in the original risings there were no chapter divisions or verse numbers and so on. The translators at some stage way back have sought to help us by dividing the writings up into these convenient chapters.

But I think sometimes we have to keep that in mind, that there is a chapter division that's taking place. With that in mind, I'd like to read the next chapter to you. Shall we go? I'm in chapter 5 and John speaking again, of course.

I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, who is worthy to open the book and break its seals? And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. Then I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it.

And one of the elders said to me, stop weeping. Behold, the lion is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David. He has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.

And I saw between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders, a lamb standing as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the throne, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song saying, worthy are you to take the book and to break the seals, for you were slain and purchased for God with your blood, men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they will reign upon the earth. And I looked and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was myriads and myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea and all things in them I heard saying, to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb be blessing and honour and glory and dominion and power. And the four living creatures kept saying, Amen, and the elders fell down and worshipped. Glory be to God.

What a magnificent section of Scripture. I said to Sheila earlier this week as I was reading through this section and anticipating possibly speaking about it today, I said, you know there are some passages of Scripture which I feel compelled to speak about by the Lord, I believe, and yet as I come to them they're somehow intimidating, meaning by that I feel as though I've never climbed a hill in my life and I'm being responsible to climb Mount Everest which is in front of me. In other words I'm looking at something which is so enormous and we say, and this was my prayer, where do we start here? I said before I started the last chapter last week, it was not my intention to try and deal with every specific in the chapter because that would just take a lot longer than the time allocated for these meetings.

And that's certainly true when I come to this chapter here because these verses I've just read to you are so replete with information which we, in which we know there is so much meaning and significance and depth and we feel like paupers coming before the Lord with the desire to bring his word and to expound it and share it with others. Amen. When we started chapter four, we hadn't gone very far before we were looking at the throne.

Do you remember? He saw the throne which was standing beyond the opened door in heaven. As we start with chapter five here, of course everything's still in place, the throne's still there, there's one sitting in

the midst of the throne, but the focus of attention quickly moves to that which the one who is sitting upon the throne is holding, a scroll or a book in today's language and understanding. And it's in his right hand, this almighty, sovereign God is holding this book in his right hand.

And we always know when we find a reference to the right hand, I'm left handed as it happens, but when we find references to the right hand in scripture it always carries with it the idea of power. It's the strong hand. And this is in the strong hand of God here.

You know, there was a Bible commentator who lived a long time ago now and he was from the Plymouth, or he was influenced greatly by the Plymouth Brethren movement or fellowships, which happens to be the background I come from. And I remember that he recorded on one occasion, he said, with this book, he was referring to the book of Revelation, with this book when we find ourselves facing a section that is symbolic and it's dealing with symbols, we never need to guess what they mean. He said, because always there is the referent somewhere in the body of scripture.

Isn't it very interesting? And I invite you to keep that in your mind as you're reading here. It may mean that you have to do a lot of reading to find these things, but we don't have to make things up. And we live as a time today when there's so many men who are this sort of, they feel they've got the edge on the interpretation of end time prophecies.

And sometimes some of the things that we've heard them say, or we've seen them write, are the creations of the human mind and saying, well, this is what this means. And they come up with, and I could think of some right now, but we won't go there. But what we want to know, we want to know, well, what does the Bible say? Is what this man, I'm quoting, said true? And I believe it absolutely is.

God wasn't just making things up here and using different ideas that somehow came to his mind in some way. But this is his word. This is the word of God.

With that in mind, I'm going to turn back. I'm coming back here, of course, but I'm turning back into the book of Ezekiel. And there's quite a bit of reading to be done here, which I'm not going to do, but you can think about that.

But right at the beginning of the book of Ezekiel, in the second chapter, where God is called Ezekiel, I just want to read two and a half verses perhaps, or perhaps three, which will be the last three chapters of, excuse me, the last three verses of chapter 2. Verse 8. Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving to you.

Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me, and lo, a scroll was in it. That's incredibly familiar to us, isn't it now? When he spread it out before me, it was written on the front and on the back. Do you remember we read that too, didn't we, about the scroll? And if you're familiar with the Scriptures, you'll know also that when God gave the commandments in stone to Moses, we're told that they were written on the back and on the front.

And written on it were lamentations, mourning, and woe. So that's what we learn from that reference. And I think that there are obviously are sections of the text which we have to say, well, I don't think, I know that there are these references I've just mentioned too about being written on the inside and on the outside, back and on the front.

I can find those three that I've referred to, one in Revelation, in Ezekiel, and then in Exodus. What does that mean then? And I don't know any verse of Scripture that helps me with an answer to that. And of course, it's at times like this when we say, well, I think it might mean such and such.

I'm taking away from this fact that I'm finding that there's a focus on the fact that everything, everything that needs to be said is said. And there's no, it's not like some Bibles you can get hold of, which you've interleaved. So you've got some blank pages, you know, so that you can write what you're finding.

I'm not saying there's anything wrong with that, but God's not leaving, in this book that he's holding in his hand, there's no blank pages or blank spaces where you can write your notes in it and add something. In other words, what God has said, he's said, and he said absolutely all that needs to be said, and that's it. It's complete in itself and so on.

I think that that's what's going on here and so on. Now then, just moving away from the text again for just a few moments, I want you to turn to the book of Jeremiah. Would you go there with me? And in chapter 32, Jeremiah 32.

We've limited on time, so let me just tell you that the time, the events that are taking place at this moment where we're going to be reading, it's just previous to the fall of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is going to be taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and Jeremiah is a prophet at this particular point in time, and the people, God's people are going to be carried away from their homeland, and they're going to be carried away into Babylon. And God has told Jeremiah, this is part of his prophetic word to the people, that God was going to do this because of their rebelliousness and their sin.

God was going to allow them to be taken away from their homeland, and he was going to take them away for 70 years. And at the end of 70 years, he would allow them to be brought back again and restore the land to them. So that's what's going on at this point in time.

I'm in chapter 32, and I hope you haven't forgotten kind of why we're here, but I think it'll come back to you in a moment. And Jeremiah said, and I should tell you that Jeremiah's in prison at this point in time, as a man of God, with the word of God, he's in prison. And Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came to me, saying, behold, Hanumel, the son of Shalom, your uncle is coming to you, saying, buy for yourself my field, which is at Anathrof, for you have the right of redemption to buy it.

Then Hanumel, my uncle's son, came to me in the court of the guard, according to the word of the Lord, and said to me, buy my field, please, which is at Anathrof, which is in the land of Benjamin, for you have the right of possession, and the redemption is yours. Buy it for yourself. Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord.

See, the Lord had spoken to him privately. Now, lo and behold, his cousin has come to him and making this offer to him. Jeremiah's in prison.

Jeremiah knows that shortly Nebuchadnezzar's coming, and they're going to be all carried away into Babylon. But nevertheless, his cousin is saying, you want to buy this piece of land? I mean, this is a great deal. Like, why would you want to buy a piece of land when the whole land's going to be taken over by enemies for the next 70 years, and where will you be by then? But he said, but I know the Lord spoke to me and told me that this was to happen, so he agreed to buy it.

And I bought the field, which was at Anathrof, from Hanumel, my uncle's son. And I weighed out the silver, 17 shekels of silver, and I signed and sealed the deed, note that, and called in witnesses, and weighed out the silver on the scales. Then I took the deeds of purchase, both the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions and the open copy, and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch, and so on.

We could just keep reading to the end of the and it continues on, and so on. I think I'll just tell you how this winds up. You can read all the detail here if you wish.

But the fact of the matter is, perhaps I can just break into this a bit further down. I'll read in verse 42, way down. For thus says the Lord, just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them.

Fields will be bought in this land of which you say it is desolation without man or beast. It is given unto the hand of the Chaldeans. Men will buy fields for money, and sign and seal deeds, and call in witnesses in the land of Benjamin, in the environs of Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the lowland, and the cities of the Negev.

For I will restore their fortunes, declares the Lord. Do you see this? What God had said to Jeremiah, on the one hand, didn't seem to make any sense at all. Why did a man who's in prison need to put money out to buy a piece of land when shortly after his release he would feel the whole land is going to be taken over by the Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians? But he did it because sovereign God had a plan for it.

And he bought it even though the cousin was probably just taking advantage of his uncle at the time. But God was using that situation. And so it would be in the years ahead, God likewise promising that this will come to an end, and you will come back to the land, and then the land will be worth a lot of money, and people will want to buy it.

And so there would be someone, we don't know who, but there would be someone in that later stage who would find the deed, having been told where it was hidden or concealed, that was made out on that earlier occasion, those 70 odd years earlier. And he would be able to say, I am the heir of Jeremiah. I have the right to break the seals on that deed and then take possession of that piece of property because it was theirs, and so on.

And so in the same way, I believe that what we're reading about in chapter 5 of Revelation, this book which is in the hand of the Almighty God, is really a title deed, and it's sealed, and it's sealed with seven seals. And I believe that that book is the deed of human destiny. I believe that it contained the summation of all things that ordained and written by God the Father, and those things would be up to and including the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, and indeed, I believe, the renewal of the cosmos.

I believe that book contained the Father's strategy for all that would lie ahead out into what we would call eternity, and it would deal with redemption, it would deal with the final judgment of evil, and it would all be listed out there in that book. I won't ask you to turn just quickly. I'm in Isaiah chapter 46, and I read there, For I am God, and there is no other.

I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning, from the ancient times, things which have not been done, saying, My purpose will be established. I will accomplish my good pleasure. This is the God that was revealing himself to John on the Isle of Patmos.

He is God, and he's sovereign, and he doesn't see the future just because he's able to look down through the corridor of time and see how things will happen, but he's the sovereign God who has ordained these very things, and they're recorded in this book. Do you remember, perhaps I should just say, first of all, in this book, I believe, were included the particulars of the inheritance of the people of God. Paul writes to the Ephesians, Ephesians 1:11, and he says, In him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.

Amen. This document that we're looking at here, I believe, deals with every twister and every turn in history in advance. It's all there.

This is our God. He's sovereign, and he's ordained these things, and this document was sealed. It says with seven seals.

We were talking about numbers just before the meeting over the lunchtime, and number seven, which we discover from just watching it as it appears in many different contexts through the Bible, it clearly carries with it the idea of perfection or of completeness. So here, when I read this here, I'm reading that this document which has been written by God the Father and has been sealed by God is sealed perfectly. It's perfectly and completely sealed.

It is totally sealed. The question that comes up in the passage is this. Let me just, we're looking at chapter five of Revelation.

Where shall I decide to read here? So, we haven't gone very far down the chapter, I'm just realizing. I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice. This is verse two.

Who is worthy? Who has the authority, this is? Who has the authority to open the seals? Who's the executor here? Who is worthy to open the book and to break the seals? And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the book or look into it. And John says, I began to weep. And in the Greek language, the idea is that he began to weep profusely.

This was not just like tears just begin to well up in his eyes. In other words, if no one can open this document that belongs to God, where God is going to inform us and show us things which must, or if you like, let me rephrase that, the reason for everything and the purpose for everything. What a dreadful thing.

And he's weeping and breaking his heart. And then one of the elders speaks up in verse five and he says, stop weeping. Strong language.

Stop weeping, he said. Behold, the lion is from the tribe of Judah, the root of David, and he has overcome so as to open the book and its seals. Glory to God.

How wonderful this is here when we read this here. The fact of the matter is, without this document being opened, the Father's plan, the Father's purpose, the Father's justice and the blessing of God for mankind, it appears, could not come to pass. It would remain forever sealed.

It would not happen. No part of God's great plan would be possible without the book's seals being broken and the possibility of the things that God intended being available to be outworked. It takes my mind back to another scripture.

It says, without the shedding of blood, there's no remission for sins. And also we know that the scripture teaches very, very plainly that this wasn't merely the blood of bulls and of goats or animals' blood. The blood which would pay the price for God's great purpose and plan to come into effect would have to be pure blood.

I've talked about this on many earlier occasions, but it was a man who, by his disobedience, opened the door for sin and for death to become realities for human beings. And in the mind of God, that situation could only be reversed by another man, another man closing that door, and he would close the door by the shedding of his own blood. And as a result, he would open the door, unlock the book, if you like.

He'd open the door to life and blessing and inheritance for men and women and the complete judgment of all that has been evil through the ages and so on. The lion of the tribe of Judah. I'll just turn back into the Old Testament for just one reference here, because as we read that, that takes us all the way back to the book of Genesis.

You needn't turn there. I need to be quick here. Chapter 49 of Genesis reads like this.

This, of course, is the reading out of the prophecy concerning the sons. Let me see where I am. Let me just read.

I'll just go straight to verse 8 of chapter 49, which says, Judah, your brothers shall praise you. Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies. Your father's son shall bow down to you.

Judah is a lion's whelp. From the prey of my son you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, as a lion who dares rouse him up.

The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet until Shiloh comes. And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. And there is no question in our minds at all that while there was an application of this to Judah himself, there's a prophetic feature here in this passage, which very clearly, even back here in the 49th chapter of Genesis, is looking forward to that moment when Shiloh, Shiloh is a translation of which means peacemaker, until the peacemaker comes.

And who is the peacemaker? He will be of the tribe of Judah. And there's this reference to the lion, Shiloh the lion and so on. And this takes my mind back to my early days in Sunday school when we used to sing, for the lion of Judah shall break every chain and give us the victory again and again.

Amen. And so when we're reading this message here that this one, says the elder, who is able to open these seals and cause this to become a reality, is the lion of Judah. And also he's of the root of David, King David, the link back into the Old Testament.

He would be a descendant of David's line, great King David. But it doesn't just say he will be a descendant of David, it says he's of the root of David. He's saying not only as this one who will be able to open this book, come from the line of David, he's really saying David's of him.

He's one who precedes David. He's greater than King David. He is the one.

And at this point in time, in this unfolding revelation, I'm sure that John now from his weeping and his heart broken here, is suddenly transformed because now this elder has given him hope, he's given him cause for hope. There is someone. He is called the lion of the tribe of Judah.

He's of the root of David. He's capable of opening the seals. And we read this here.

Then one of the elders came to him and said this, and then verse 6 of our chapter, it says, I saw between the throne with the four living creatures and the elders a lamb standing as if it had been slain. A lamb standing as if it had been slain. What's David looking for? Clearly by his own words all around this section, he's seeing things which are just way out, they're sort of outside of the dimension.

Who are these living creatures, for example, and so on. So when he hears this one, this lion of the tribe of Judah, I think it would be quite rational for him to think he's going to see this great, this king of beasts, the lion. When he looks, he sees a blood-covered lamb as if it had been slain, it says here.

The Greek word, if it was translated more accurately for us, it would be the word which Charles Wesley uses in one of his hymns. It would be the word slaughtered. The slaughtered lamb.

In other words, John, who in the midst of all this trauma and all of this going on here and what he's hearing and the implications and so forth and so on and so on, he's looking for some mighty superpower that's going to be able to resolve this situation. And when he looks, he sees a lamb and even the word lamb is in the diminutive. In other words, it's Mr North, I remember he used to talk about my pet lamb.

It's a young lamb, a young lamb covered in blood as though it had been slaughtered. The word is so graphic that it was no normal lamb of course. It was unique, this lamb.

It had seven horns. We're back to the number seven. Clearly the horns speak of its power, its strength.

This lamb has perfect power. It's been slaughtered, but it has perfect power and perfect strength. It has seven eyes.

This lamb has perfect eyesight. His seven spirits have gone into all the earth and his eyes see everything. Everything is exposed before him with whom we have to do.

He sees everything. And of course, this takes our mind again as we try to deal with all these challenging statements. It reminds me of Genesis 22.

Abraham is going with Isaac up the mountain where he's to offer his son. And the son says, Father, we've got wood, we've got fire, but where's the lamb to be offered? And the father answers quite prophetically, no question. He says, Son, God will provide himself the lamb.

We say, wow. And then of course we race back in the other direction and we hear John the Baptist pointing to a man. He says, behold, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

Amen. And I love the word here of the elder. He says, he has prevailed to open the seals.

He's prevailed. What a wonderful word. And of course that, once again, it has our mind thinking of the events of Calvary and all that were part and parcel of that, not merely his physical suffering and the physical blood that was spilled, but being dealt with by his fathers and judged by his father on our behalf, separated from his father.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And there's something happening that is not written down because it can't be written down in our language as he standing as me, as you, as the sinner is dealt with and judged. But on our behalf, he vicariously gives himself to that death to save us. And the Lion of Judah

breaks every chain and gives us the victory again and again.

I can't spend so long on the second point I'm thinking of here, but let me just quickly say that not only am I taking away from this passage, the sovereignty of God and the way this has been working out in these things we've been looking at here, but it certainly reminds us of just the inclusiveness of the work of the cross. I'm thinking of yet another passage from the Old Testament, which I won't be able to describe just now, but some of you will recall it when I mention one small phrase, where a full price was paid for a piece of property. And we're able to say that when Christ, when this Lion of Judah, this root of David, when he prevailed on the cross, he paid the full price.

He paid the full price and it was paid not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as the Apostle Peter. And consequently he is, as we sing sometimes, the worthy one. He's the worthy one.

He's the qualified one. He's the qualified executor who's able to break the seals and make all this that's recorded and ordained by God to become a reality in human history. Amen.

And the breaking of those seals clearly define facts concerning human history. We could read on in following chapters to confirm that beyond any doubt. But also it has an eternal aspect.

It has to do with that which lies beyond this world and has an eternal impact there, which we can't pause to think about just now and so on. And there's a third thing which I'll use to draw this presentation to a close with, and that is this unforgettable sight that John was exposed to. These things having now taken place, the book seals are all broken and the body of people, this enormous innumerable company of people break forth into worship.

Amen. And that worship, I could read in verse 9, we read there already, I won't re-read it. It presents to us, I think, the epitome of spiritual worship.

There can be nothing higher than this that we can think of if we come with the question, well, what does spiritual worship look like? I remember Jesus saying to the woman at the well, the Father's seeking those who will worship him in spirit and in truth. And we say, well, what does that look like? How will that work? We can turn to no better place in the whole of the Bible, and certainly no better place can be found in the churches anywhere, but to turn our attention to this heavenly order. And we watch and listen as this innumerable company move together in holy spiritual worship.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah for this. And there was no flesh there, you know, in this fleshly sense.

There was no superstar musician involved. There was no worship leader. There were no hymn books.

There were no prayers with well-worn clichés. They just repeatedly, the elders, representative of the entire church, we find them repeatedly falling down on their faces and saying, worthy are you. Oh Lord, worthy is the lamb that was slain.

Their entire focus was not on themselves, not on anything, not on their skills to do this right. They're just overcome. This is awesome in the truest sense, as they fall before him and just say, you're worthy, Lord.

You're worthy. What a privilege that the church is called into the blessing which becomes ours, the inheritance which becomes ours through the redeeming death of Christ, which was ordained by God the Father before time was. You know, today, so much, this is not a criticism, it's an observation.

So much in the church is so much in our songs even. So much in our prayers is about ourselves. It's all about me, we say.

I've even heard the preachers, but it's the folly of preachers who say, if you were the only one alive, God's love is such that he would have died just for you. But God knew that would never be. God knew that would never be because he chose a great company.

The wonder of it all is that he included me in that company. The wonder of it is that he chose us. Amen.

And they sang a song, it says, we could read in chapter 14 of Revelation, they sang a song that no man could learn. In other words, this expression of worship, this song that came from their hearts, it wasn't something learned, it wasn't something mimicked or copied from another. It's something that just sprang spontaneously out of their own hearts.

And it sprang spontaneously, why? Because of the revelation of what they were exposed to. And there was nothing in the whole world that was more appropriate in that moment than to fall on their faces and say, Lord, you, you are worthy. You are the worthy one.

You know, it makes me want to say, Lord, please forgive us when we mumble and lisp some words of praise. Someone did write some words, and I'm closing with these, that came to my heart as I was putting these thoughts together this morning. I wish we were in a situation where we could sing it out.

But that's not for today. Crown him with many crowns. The Lamb upon his throne.

Hark how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own. Awake my soul and sing of him who died for thee. Oh, and hail him as the matchless king through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of love. Behold his hands and side. Rich wounds yet visible above, in beauty glorified.

No angel in the sky can fully bear the sight, but downward bends his burning eye at mysteries so bright. Crown him the Lord of years, the potentate of time, creator of the rolling spears, ineffably sublime. All hail, Redeemer, hail, for thou hast died for me.

Thy praise shall never, never fail throughout eternity. Amen.

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