



Revelation 5

Revelation 5
Tape #8244
By Chuck Smith

Back now in the book of Revelation chapter five. John is in heaven. He observes the throne of God. That's the first thing that captures his attention is the throne of God. The glory of the throne of God and Him who sits upon the throne. He observes the cherubim about the throne of God as they are worshipping God. And then he watches the twenty-four elders respond to the worship of the cherubim as they fall on their faces before the throne, taking their golden crowns, casting them on the glassy sea. As they declare the worthiness of God to receive the glory and the honor and the power ascribed to Him by the cherubim.

Now John's attention is drawn to a scroll that is in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. The scroll has writing on the inside and outside. It is sealed with seven seals. So John says,

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a (5:1).

In King James, book, but more literally, a scroll. They didn't have books in those days. The scroll was upon papyrus, paper made of the papyrus and it was rolled in a scroll and the scroll of Revelation would have been about probably twenty feet long. And you would roll from the right to the left and as you would read the Greek scroll of the book of Revelation. So in heaven there is this scroll. It has seven seals.

And John saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose the seals thereof (5:2)?

And John tells us,

No man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much (5:3,4),

Literally, I sobbed convulsively.

because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon (5:4).

Here is this interesting scroll. And the angel asking, Who is worthy to take this scroll and loose the seals? And no man found worthy, John begins to sob convulsively. What is the scroll? Many commentators, and I agree with them, believe that the scroll is the title deed to the earth in which are written the terms of the redemption of the earth.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. It belonged to God by virtue of divine creation. But God then gave the earth to man. When He created Adam and placed him on the earth, He told Adam that he was to have dominion over the earth. He was to take care of it and treasure it as a beautiful gift of God.

But when Satan came and tempted Eve to eat of the tree in the midst of the garden, of which God had told them specifically they were not to eat of that tree, and if they did they would surely die, when Eve ate and gave to Adam and he ate in disobedience to the command of God, but it was also obedience to Satan. A double action. And in so doing, Adam and Eve left the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life and they entered into the kingdom of Satan, the kingdom of death and darkness.

And in so doing, the earth, which was theirs was given over to Satan. They forfeited this beautiful earth into Satan's control. And Satan has control over the world today. Paul calls him the god of this world. Jesus referred to him as the prince of this world.

When Jesus came to the earth, His purpose in coming to the earth was to redeem the world back to God. It once belonged to God, God gave it to man, man in a sense gave it to Satan, but Jesus came to redeem the world back to God, to pay the price of redemption. That was His death upon the cross, the shedding of His blood. The giving of His life for man's sin--the price of redemption. Peter said, "We are not redeemed with silver or gold, from our empty living; but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, who was slain as a lamb without spot or blemish" (1 Peter 1:18,19). He paid the price to redeem us from sin.

Satan, when Jesus began His public ministry, after He was baptized and the Holy Spirit had come upon

Him, Satan took Him to a high mountain. He showed Him all of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. And Satan said to Jesus, All of these will I give to You if You will bow down and worship me. For they are mine and I can give them to whomever I will. Jesus did not dispute the claim of Satan. But acknowledged that he was the possessor of the earth at that time. Jesus came to redeem the world back to God. But not by bowing down to Satan but by going to the cross and giving His life as a ransom for all. And so Jesus in answer to Satan said, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve (Matthew 4:8-10). But Satan is the god of this world and is in control to the present time.

Now a little further on in the Book of Revelation when we get to chapter thirteen, we're going to find that there's going to arise a world ruler and Satan is going to empower this man. He is going to give to him his throne and his authority. This man will be known as the antiChrist. And Satan empowers him with his power and with his authority and Satan will seek to be worshipped through this man. Of course, Satan has desired worship. His fall was perpetrated by his desire of being exalted above the other angels, above the stars of God. And his endeavor to elevate himself to the position of worship that belongs only to God. And so, Satan still possesses. He hasn't yet turned the world over to this antiChrist. We will get that, as I said, in chapter thirteen of the book of Revelation where Satan turns over the power and authority of the earth to him. He offered it to Jesus. He will give it to his emissary in chapter thirteen.

Now Jesus paid the price to redeem the world back to God. However, He has not yet laid claim to that which He purchased. In the book of Hebrews, it talks about how that "Jesus was made a little lower for the suffering of death, that He might be crowned with glory and honor. And that all things might be put under His feet. But the writer said, We do not yet see all things put under Him" (Hebrews 2:7-9). We have this period of time since the price of redemption was paid until the Lord redeems His purchased possession.

In the book of Ephesians, we are told concerning the faith that God has given to us the gift of the Holy Spirit "which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." So in the meantime, God has given us the Holy Spirit. It's sort of a down payment. It's sort of God's indication that He is intent, He is earnest in His intention of redeeming you. And so the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit and as Paul talks again to the Ephesians, "We are sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13,14).

In the book of Romans, Paul said that "we and all of creation are groaning and travailing together until now as we wait for the manifestation of the sons of God, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23). That is yet future, the redeeming of the world.

When I was a child, I was told the story, I think in kindergarten or something, they read the story of the gingerbread man. And how that this little girl had baked the gingerbread man. And after she had put the icing on it and the raisins, buttons and so forth, this little gingerbread man jumped out of the pan and began to run down the street. And she began to chase after him. And he called back, Run, run, as fast as you can, you'll never catch me, I'm a gingerbread man. And he was right. She couldn't catch him. And she went home weeping and sorrowful.

The next day as she was walking down the street, as she passed the bakery, as she looked into the window, there in the case was her gingerbread man smiling at her. And so she went into the bakery and she said to the proprietor, I want my gingerbread man. He's there in the window. The baker said, He will cost you ten cents. She said, No, you don't understand. He's mine. The baker said, I'm sorry, if you want him, it will cost you ten cents. So she went home and emptied out her piggy bank, got the ten coins, went back to the baker and said, I want now my gingerbread man, as she placed the ten cents down on the counter. He pulled it out of the case and handed it to her and she clasped it tightly onto her chest as she said, Now you are really mine. First of all, I made you and now I have bought you. You're really mine.

As Jesus clutches you close, He says, Now you are really Mine. I made you and I bought you. You're really Mine. He has redeemed us by His blood. And thus, here is the title deed to the earth. The angel proclaims, Who is worthy to take this scroll, break the seals? No man is found worthy in heaven, in earth, under the earth. No man can redeem the world. No government can redeem the world.

There have been several men who have attempted to redeem the world but they've only made a bigger mess. It was Hitler's goal to redeem the world, to create the super race to inhabit the world. But oh, what a mess he made in his endeavor to redeem. I think Clinton dreams of redeeming the world. Enough said.

No man can redeem the world. No man is worthy. No man can save himself, much less others. And surely no man can redeem the world. And so John begins to sob. Why? Because under the law of redemption found back in Leviticus chapter fourteen, under the law of redemption, a person who sold his property had the right to redeem it if it was in the city, within a walled city, he had the right to redeem it within a year. If it wasn't redeemed within the year, the transfer of the property became complete and it remained in the new ownership perpetually.

If the earth is not redeemed in the specified time, the consequence is that it stays under Satan's control forever. This is more than John could take. The thought of the world going on under Satan's power. The thought of the powers of darkness ruling and continuing to rule over the world. Satan's name, we'll get later on in the Book of Revelation as he unlooses the evil spirits that are in the abusso, his name in the Hebrew is Abaddon and in the Greek Apollyon which means destroyer. Satan is a destroyer! Look at how many lives are being destroyed by Satan! If you are under Satan's power tonight, he is in the process of destroying your life and if you will look at yourself honestly, take a true inventory, you would have to admit that your life is being destroyed because you've given yourself over to the flesh, which is destructive. And it is destroying you.

And so the thought of the world staying under Satan's control and power is more than John can handle. And John begins to sob with the thought that the world is going to be under Satan's control forever.

But one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals (5:5).

The Lion of the tribe of Juda goes back to Genesis as Jacob is prophesying over his son, "Judah is a lion's whelp. And the scepter shall not depart from Judah, until the Messiah comes" (Genesis 49:9,10). It also is from the eleventh chapter of the book of Isaiah where it refers to the root of David. And thus Jesus, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the scroll, and to loose the seven seals." John said,

I beheld, and, lo, in the midst or the middle of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders (5:6),

There in the center of the heavenly scene,
there stood a Lamb as it had been slain or slaughtered (5:6),

This is not doctrine, it is suggestion. There's an interesting passage in Isaiah chapter fifty-three concerning the Messiah. And Isaiah tells us that "when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." That is, we'll not be attracted by His beauty. Now I know that there have been some beautiful pictures of Christ painted by different artists. And if you're expecting to see one who looks like say, Solomon's head of Christ, you're probably going to be greatly disappointed and you won't recognize the Lord. It's interesting that He said that "He has no form or beauty when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." We won't be attracted to His beauty. But then he goes on to say, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him." The idea there being is that we turned our face. Could it be that we are so shocked at how He looks that we can't bear to look?

Have you ever come upon an accident where people were badly mangled? And you look at them but you're so shocked you sort of turn away because it's shocking to see how mangled their bodies are. But he said, "Surely He has borne our griefs, He's carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:2-5). There are scriptures that would seem to indicate that Jesus even after His resurrection bore the mark of the cross in His body.

It is interesting that the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognize Him until He broke the bread and they probably saw the nailprints in His hands. It is interesting that when He appeared to His disciples, when Thomas was present who had expressed his doubt of the resurrection and said that he would not believe until he could see the prints in His hand and the wound in His side, when Jesus appeared, He said, Look, Thomas, see the prints. Feel My side, see if it isn't Me. You remember Thomas cried out, My Lord and my God.

It says that when Jesus comes, that they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced. And Zechariah says that some of them will say, “What are the meaning of these wounds in your hand? And He will answer, These are the wounds that I received in the house of My friends” (Zechariah 13:6).

It could be that your first view of Jesus will be a very shocking thing because it is possible that He is still bearing the marks of the beating and of the cross. His face beaten until it was so swollen, you could not recognize Him as a human being as Isaiah prophesied in the fifty-second chapter, “His visage or face was so marred, you couldn’t recognize Him as a human being” (Isaiah 52:14). And thus when we first see Him, it is possible that we might still see the marks of His suffering and death. If that is so, I’m certain that it will break all of our hearts to realize what He endured in order to redeem us from our sins. It will surely evoke thanksgiving and praise spontaneously from all of our hearts if we indeed see Him with the marks of His suffering and death still there.

Ultimately, when He sets up the kingdom we will see Him in the glorified form. And “that they may see Me with the glory that I had with Thee, Jesus said, before the world ever was” (John 17:5). John describes Him in the glorified form back in chapter one. That will be ultimate. But until the redemption is complete, until the scroll has the seven seals removed, it is possible that He will still bear the marks of the price of redemption that we might see what He was willing to endure because He loves you so much that words cannot describe it. Jesus said to His disciples, “Greater love has no man than this, than a man will lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). And when we see the marks of the cross, we’ll realize the depths of His love and I’m sure that it will tug at each of our hearts.

So John sees Him, notice, he sees Him not as the Lion of the tribe of Judah but he sees Him as a lamb that has been slain.

he has seven horns (5:6)

In the scriptures the horn is a symbol of power. The number seven is the number of completeness. And thus the complete power or the omnipotence of Jesus!

he has seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God that are sent forth into all the earth (5:6).

The eyes, of course, the symbol of seeing or the number seven again, all seeing or the omniscience of Jesus. Seeing all things. So the seven horns, the omnipotence; the seven eyes, the omniscience of Jesus—the characteristics and attributes of deity.

And he came and he took the scroll out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne (5:7).

What a dramatic moment! Here we see the scroll in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne, the strong angel with a loud voice asking who is worthy to take the scroll and loose the seals. No one found worthy until Jesus steps forth there in the midst of the throne, taking the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne.

And when he had taken the scroll, the four cherubim and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb (5:8),

Here they were worshipping Him who sat upon the throne and now they worship the Lamb, falling down before the Lamb,

having every one of them harps, and golden vials which are full of odours, which are the prayers of saints (5:8).

Prayer is often likened unto incense, a sweet-smelling savor unto God. It talks about in the Old Testament the altar of incense. How that the priest would go in before the altar of incense and the sweet smell of the incense rising was a symbol of the prayers of God’s people that rises up to the Lord, that comes to the Lord as a sweet-smelling incense. How God loves to have you commune with Him! How God loves to just have you sit down and open up your heart to Him and express to Him your love and your worship and our prayers ascend as incense before the throne of God because the earthly tabernacle was only a model of the heavenly scene. And so the prayers rising as incense before the Lord. So they bring these little golden vials full of odours which are the prayers of the saints at the time that Jesus takes the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne. A very dramatic scene!

I believe that the prayers are the prayers that we have offered to the Lord when we pray, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. For the time has now come for the kingdom of God to

come and for the Lord to establish His righteous reign over the earth. And throughout the centuries, the church has followed the model that Jesus gave when He said to pray, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven! And as we have longed and we've prayed, Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus, all of these prayers of the coming kingdom will be offered at that time for the time of their fulfillment has come.

And they sung a new song (5:9),

Who is the "they sung a new song?" As you read the lyrics of the song, it becomes very obvious who is singing the song. "They sung a new song,"

saying, Thou art worthy to take the scroll, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and you have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And You have made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (5:9,10).

Let me say at this point that this is one of the reasons why I do not like the modern translations. Because the modern translations change this passage and they would have them singing, For thou was slain and has redeemed them to God by Thy blood, as though they are singing about us. No, this is the song we are singing. The vast majority of the ancient manuscripts read the "us" in there in chapter ten, You have made us unto our God kings and priests. And the modern translations I do not like for this reason. Barnes, Adam Clark and the great commentators and exegetical commentators such as Adam Clark and Barnes and all agree on "Thou has made us unto our God."

I believe that this is the song of the church singing there in heaven of the worthiness of the Lamb to take the book and to loose the seals because He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood! It's not the song of redeemed Israel. This is the song of the redeemed from all the world, the church, that is comprised of people from every nation and tribe and family and tongue. And our destiny and our future is to be a kingdom of priests. "He has made us unto our God a kingdom of priests. And we shall reign with Him upon the earth."

Back in chapter one, "Unto Him who loved us and gave Himself for us and has made us unto our God a kingdom of priests" (Revelation 1:5,6). And so the future is very beautiful for the church as the Lord returns to the earth and we return with Him, we will be His representatives throughout the world. We will be a kingdom of priests who will bring people unto the Lord and bring the Lord to the people in that great day.

Notice they declare the worthiness to take the scroll, to loose the seals because He was slain. He paid the price of redemption. Redeemed us by His blood. We sing, *Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am.* And so, here we are in heaven singing the song of redemption.

Now after we are through, the angels, multitude of angels join with us.

And I beheld, [he said] I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the cherubim and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand [or a hundred million], plus thousands of thousands, [which are millions more] (5:11);

How many angels are there? I don't know. But I'll tell you, there will be a big crowd as they are singing the exploits and the glory of the Lamb.

They are singing with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing (5:12).

These are the things that will be bestowed upon Jesus at this time. The power. All power, He said, is given to me in heaven and earth. He is worthy to receive that power. The glory, the riches, the wisdom, the strength, the honor, the blessing. Worthy of these things. The blessings of the people and the angels. And then it even grows from there.

Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth (5:13),

That is, those who have died who are now resurrected.

and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four living creatures or cherubim said, Amen. And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshipped him that lives forever and ever (5:13,14).

As He said to the church of Smyrna, "Behold, I was dead and am alive forevermore" (Revelation 2:8). Now there are many passages of scripture that refer to the day when every knee will bow and every tongue

will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord. Back in Psalm 22:29, “And all they that be fat on the earth shall eat and worship and they that go down to the dust [that is, those that are dead] shall bow before Him and none can keep alive His own soul.”

In Isaiah 45:23, the Lord said, “I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness and shall not return.” God is saying, I swear by myself. He couldn’t swear by anything higher. The Bible says when a man takes an oath, he takes an oath by something higher. But because God can’t swear by anything higher, there’s nothing higher than God, He has to swear by Himself. But if God takes an oath, you can be sure that this is as strong and powerful as it gets. What? “That unto Me every knee shall bow and every tongue shall swear” (Isaiah 45:23).

Paul, writing to the Romans there in chapter fourteen in verse eleven said, “For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God.” And then in Philippians chapter two, as Paul speaks of how that Jesus, though He was in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Yet He took upon Himself the form of man, became a servant, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

Now you may not want to do that. You may not want to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord. You may not want to bow your knee to the lordship of Jesus. You may say, I am going to live after my own desires, my own wishes. I will not submit to the authority of Jesus in my life. And now you have that ability because God has made us self-determinate creatures. But one day, like it or not, every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.

The tragedy is that if you wait until you are forced to bow your knee at that day and make the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. That will not be a confession unto salvation but it will be a confession unto damnation as you make the confession that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but you refused to submit to His lordship in your life. And so you don’t want to wait until that day to make the confession.

Paul said, “If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the mouth confession is made unto righteousness and with the heart man believes unto salvation” (Romans 10:9,10). But one day every knee shall bow. If you don’t do it now, you’ll do it later. Doing it now will bring you salvation. Waiting till later only is acknowledging the righteousness of God in bringing you damnation. So you need to think that one over because sooner or later, you’re going to do it. Better sooner than later, for sure!

The whole universe shall acknowledge the lordship of Jesus Christ. You see, God has given to Him a name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, every tongue confess. So here we find in Revelation chapter five at the end all of the creatures declaring the worthiness of the Lamb and the glory to the Lamb forever and ever! Glory, power be unto Him that sits upon the throne forever and ever. Blessing, honor, glory, power!

Now in chapter six, He begins to break the seals on this scroll. And as He breaks the seals there in heaven, there are corresponding events that are taking place on the earth. These events are the beginning of the judgment period as God begins to pour out His judgment upon the earth. So chapter six begins the great period of judgment that is coming upon the Christ-rejecting world. And as we go from six through eighteen, we will be reading of the events of God’s judgment as His wrath is poured out upon the earth because of the sinfulness. Because of their following in the rebellion of Satan against the authority of God. Because they have destroyed the world that God gave to man. And thus God will begin His judgment upon them.

Notice that we are in the heavenly scene in chapter five. The church is there, singing, “Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals because He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood out of every nation, tribe, tongue and people. He has made us unto our God kings and priests and we shall reign with Him on the earth!” We’re up there singing of the worthiness.

The tribulation doesn’t start until chapter six. We’re already in heaven. The rapture of the church has taken place. In Luke 21, when Jesus is giving the disciples the signs of His coming and the end of the age, He tells them that there’s going to be this great tribulation that is going to come upon the earth. And He

tells them some of the events of the great tribulation. Some of the cataclysmic kind of judgments of God where the stars will fall from heaven, tremendous meteorite showers and the earth removed out of her place and just these terrible things. The earthquakes, the tidal waves and the destruction that comes from God and also from the demon hordes that are going to be released upon the earth as God judges the earth for their sin.

Jesus, when He was talking to His disciples about these things of the great tribulation period, said, "Pray ye always, that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things that are coming to pass upon the earth and to be standing before the Son of man" (Luke 21:36). You see, when this day comes, you will be here on the earth to experience the judgment of God or you will be there in heaven beholding it from the heavenly scene. Jesus said, "Pray ye always you'll be accounted worthy to escape the things that are coming upon the earth and to stand before the Son of man." Believe me, if Jesus said that I should pray for that, you better know that I am praying for that. I want to be in that crowd in heaven. That when He takes the scroll out of the right hand, the title deed, and begins to lay claim to that which He purchased, I want to be there singing, Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and to loose the seals! I don't want to be down here on earth when He begins to break those seals!

And as we get into that next week, you won't want to be down here either! And so, we'll move on now into the events that will be taking place on the earth during this seven-year period of time that we will be with the Lord in heaven. At the end of this judgment period, then in chapter nineteen, we return in glory with Jesus to the earth as He establishes then His kingdom upon the earth! And so we're moving into the future scene and I think that it is vitally important at this time because I believe that we are very, very close now to these things transpiring that we're going to be reading about in the Book of Revelation! I think we're on the verge of these things now.

Jesus said, again in Luke, When you see these things, talking about the wickedness and the iniquity and all on the earth, He said when you see these things beginning to come to pass, then you look up and lift up your head because your redemption is drawing nigh. So we've got some exciting chapters ahead as we take a look into the future as God renovates the earth or brings judgment upon the earth in preparation for the return of Jesus Christ with the church to establish God's kingdom, the righteous rule and reign of God over the earth! Exciting days ahead!

And so, as Jesus said, Look up, lift up your head for your redemption draws nigh. And pray always that you'll be accounted worthy to escape these things that are going to happen on the earth that you might be standing before the Lord there in glory!

Father, You've given us fair warning in the scripture. The things that You've spoken about have come to pass many of them already. And we see how that we are moving very definitely towards these final things. Lord, there are some here tonight who are not ready. If You should call Your church home tonight, they would be left to face this great tribulation and the events that will transpire when Jesus begins to break the seals from the scroll. Lord, it's tragic because they don't need to be here. You provided the way of redemption through Your blood. And we pray, Lord, that this might be the night that many will make their decision to submit to Jesus as their Lord. This will be the night when they bow their knee and confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Lord, speak to our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.