

REVELATION – CHAP. 5.

"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back [or outside] close sealed with seven seals, and I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? And no one in the heaven, or on the earth, was able to open the book or to look thereon."

From John's exalted stand-point he is enabled to look both backward and forward over the landscape; and that he may better understand God's dealings he is shown the unfolding of the plan from the first. Hence the events of this chapter carry us back to the beginning of the Christian dispensation.

When Ezekiel and John are said to have received the scroll, or book, it was open (Rev. 10:2; Ezekiel 2:10). At this date, but at the stand-point of this view, it had not yet been opened. The book signifies the plan and purpose of God as written in the law and the prophets. It was sealed perfectly (with seven seals) until Christ began to open it.

When the disciples asked our Lord, after his resurrection, in regard to the plan, he answered: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power, [or grasp] but you shall receive power [to understand] after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you." (Acts 1:7-8). Life, immortality and sonship have only been seen since that time (2 Tim. 1:10; John 1:12). A mighty angel, with a great voice, cries: "Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no one in heaven or on the earth [symbolic] was able to open the book or to look thereon." Probably this angel symbolizes the Law, which, from the time of its

deliverance through Moses, had been proclaiming as unworthy all who sought to overcome by it.

The faithful are represented as weeping because of the obscurity and want of knowledge in regard to the plan. "And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome, to open the book and the seven seals thereof." This elder proves to be the old patriarch Jacob, who made the prophecy on his death-bed when blessing his sons. (Gen. 49:8-12).

John now sees "in the midst of the throne" and of the living ones and the elders "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." We recognize at once the One whom John the Baptist introduced to the Jews as "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." He comes and receives the scroll out of the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. Not until he had passed the last test, had endured "to the end," had risen in victory a spiritual body, had been caught away in glory, did he receive the wonderful scroll which "the angels desired to look into."

Ten days after our Lord ascended, the Holy Spirit was given, which at once began to unfold the truth to the church. When this took place John saw the four living ones and the twenty-four elders falling together before the Lamb, each having a harp, with which they sing a new song, saying, "Worthy art thou to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood [men] of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they [shall] reign upon the earth."

When it was seen that these all acknowledged and testified of Jesus, it was indeed a new song and a glorious one; and when we listen to the beautiful harmony as the melodious chords ring out from all the golden harps, our prayers and thanksgiving go up in the

sweet incense from the golden bowls they have brought us. It is glorious news to the called of the Gentiles. Many are striving hard to find a way to prove themselves Israelites after the flesh. How much more glorious to belong [R531 : page 6] to the spiritual family who shall inherit the divine nature and attain to the rank of the royal priesthood "after the order of Melchisedec"!

As the vision of the restitution of all under the dominion of Him who "shall be a priest upon his throne" (Zech. 6:13), rises before John, he seems to turn and look down the stream of time to the glorious consummation of the plan of salvation; and, lo, the messengers that are in the presence of the throne, even myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, he heard saying with a great voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain, to receive the power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." And as the wave of thanksgiving and praise floats out over the world, the whole creation catches the strain and joins in the song: "And every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. And the four living ones said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshiped."

W. I. M.
