

THE DIVINE SCROLL – WHO IS WORTHY TO LOOK THEREIN?

"Who is worthy?" – Revelation 5:2.

THE words of our text are a part of the proclamation represented as being made throughout Heaven: "Who is worthy to open the Book [the Scroll], and to loose the seals thereof?" The Book in this case seems symbolically not to represent the Bible, but the Divine Plan, with its times and seasons. The Bible is indeed a record, but God had the Plan before the Bible was written. He had this Plan from the very beginning. He had not disclosed it to the angels – not even to the Logos. Nor did He disclose its time features fully to our Lord Jesus while He was in the flesh. And after His resurrection Jesus spoke of these times and seasons as things "which the Father hath put in His own power." – Acts 1:7.

The fact that God had a Plan relating to the fallen race had been intimated to Abraham. God had declared to Abraham unconditionally that He would bless the world of mankind. He also pointed out later in the types and shadows of the Law certain features of the way by which He would bless the world. He declared that there would be a Redeemer; but who the Redeemer would be was kept a secret. Although both angels and men desired to know they were not permitted the knowledge. The Prophets spoke by inspiration some things concerning this Redeemer, but they knew not the meaning thereof.

In due time the Logos was sent forth. He was a loyal Son before He was sent. He undertook to do the Father's will, not yet knowing what it would cost to be the Messiah; for God had kept these things secret. He manifested His faith, His trust. He delighted to do the Father's will, even to the taking of a lower nature. And so He humbled Himself from the glorious condition in which He was and

took upon Himself the human nature, became a man – a *perfect* man, not a *sinful* man. Our Lord did this in order to carry out the great Program which the Father had in His own mind and which He had not revealed to any other.

When Jesus reached the age of thirty years, the earliest age at which He could present Himself to God, under the Law, He went to Jordan and made a consecration of Himself with the determination to do everything that was in the Father's Plan – everything that typically and prophetically had been written in the Holy Scriptures concerning Himself. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God"; "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy Law is within My heart," were His heart expressions, as recorded. – Hebrews 10:7,9; Psalm 40:6-8.

This was our Lord's consecration. His *human nature* became His sacrifice. He laid down His life. He did not finish laying it down at Jordan; but so far as His will was concerned, it was given there. He there became the Priest, the great High Priest, His flesh being typed by the bullock of sin-offering, sacrificed on Israel's yearly day of Atonement. During the three and a half years of His ministry He carried out this sacrifice satisfactorily. And everything that the Father had given Him to do was finished at the Cross.

THE DEEP THINGS UNFOLDED AT JORDAN

Our Lord Jesus received the anointing of the Holy Spirit when He came up out of the water at His baptism. Then the heavens were opened unto Him. The higher things which He had not previously understood became clear. The Scriptures were unfolded to His view. He knew that He was going up to Jerusalem to be crucified. He knew that He would be betrayed by one of His chosen disciples, and He knew which of them would be the betrayer. He knew these things because He had been begotten of the Holy Spirit and accepted of God as a Son on the Divine plane.

During these three and a half years He was the Messiah, the Sent of God. He was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. He had sacrificed His will, but this was not sufficient. God wished Him to sacrifice not only His will, but actually to lay down His human life. And God purposed to prove Him by certain crucial tests. So He was "tempted in all points like as we are; yet without sin." When all His testings were completed at His death on the Cross, God gave Him a name to which all should bow, both in Heaven and in earth.

Here the words of our text find their answer. The inquiry compassed the period from before Jesus came into the world up to His resurrection from the grave. God had given the most honorable One of all the host of Heaven the first opportunity to prove His worthiness to loose the Scroll of God's great Plan, and to fulfil its provisions. He was given this opportunity because, as the First-born of Jehovah, He had the right to the first privilege of service. And He did not allow the privilege to go by. He accepted it. He was faithful. He humbled Himself to human nature, and thus He became the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, of which tribe He was born as a man. He did not have this title in His position as Logos. It was as the Son of Mary that He was the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David.

PROCLAIMED WORTHY BY THE ANGELS

Our Lord's worthiness was not then proven. It was not until He cried with His dying breath, "It is finished!" that the demonstration was complete. All the way down **[R5943 : page 253]** from Adam to Jesus no one had been found worthy to open the great Scroll. But Jesus was now found worthy. Speaking in vision of the three and a half years during which our Lord is represented as slain, John the Revelator says, "I beheld and lo, a freshly slain Lamb!" And the voices of myriads of angels were heard proclaiming, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!" – Revelation 5:12.

Jesus had not proven Himself worthy of this great honor when He made His *consecration*, but when He had finished His course in death He was then worthy to receive glory, honor and power. After His resurrection and ascension the Scroll was given into His hands to be opened. This means that the Divine Plan as a whole was here made known to Him – for He already had knowledge of much of this – but *all things* were given Him to unloose. There had been some things that our Lord did not know. He had said, "Of that day and hour [of His Second Coming] knoweth no man; no, not the angels in Heaven, *nor the Son*, but My Father only." (Mark 13:32.) A part of the Plan was written on the outside of the Scroll, and a part was written on the inside. The things that were sealed were not proper to be understood by our Redeemer until He had received the all-power, after His resurrection. The execution of God's Plan was then given into His hands.

GRADUAL OPENING OF THE SEALS

The opening of the seals has progressed during all the Gospel Age. The whole Plan of God is represented in this Book – the Scroll. It has required all of the present Age and will require all of the next Age to complete the Plan. The Plan of God includes the "Restitution of all things spoken." We are now able to see these wonderful things and to tell about them, because each of the seals as it has been opened has made the Plan a little clearer. We may suppose that the Lord Jesus was made aware of all its features after His ascension to the presence of Jehovah. We who are God's people are seeking to know these things more and more fully. The Master declared that as the Father revealed them unto Him, so would He reveal them unto us; but this revelation has been gradual, as the successive seals have been broken.

Brethren, beloved in Christ, realizing that our God has hitherto counted us worthy to look upon the wondrous Scroll of His great Plan, which has been unsealed for us by Jesus our Lord, let us

continue to prove ourselves worthy to look therein and to comprehend the glorious things of His Word, by faithfulness, obedience and loyalty to this Plan in everything! Let our appreciation continually increase for our wondrous privilege in being permitted to share this blessed ministry of bearing Divine Truth to other hungry hearts, that they also may rejoice in the Lord and in the power of His might!

