

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson 13 - Chapter 5

Today's lesson is going to be fairly complex at times so I hope you are ready to focus. Some of what we discuss may at first seem to be a great deal of trivia, but I assure you it is not. When these details that we'll discuss are lacking that is when Revelation becomes unintelligible.

We began Revelation chapter 5 last week and spent some time with making the connection between it and the Book of Daniel, especially chapters 7 and 12. Mostly what we did was an overview; even so, as is our custom, we'll briefly review.

Perhaps the most important thing that we can take from the first 6 verses of Revelation chapter 5 is that John's vision of the One sitting on throne with a scroll in His hand is directly tied to Daniel's vision of the Ancient One sitting on the throne with the one like a son of man approaching Him. So the One sitting on the throne in John's Revelation 5 vision is the same as the Ancient One sitting on the throne in the Daniel 7 vision; and that person is God. Further the one like a son of man in Daniel 7 is directly tied to the Lamb who was slaughtered in Revelation 5; and that person is Messiah Yeshua. However this identification connecting the one like the son of man to the Lamb who was slaughtered is also connected to another and different description of this same person in verse 5 that we'll explore shortly.

We also learned of the connection between Daniel 12:4 where it speaks of sealing up the book of knowledge about the future that God gave to Daniel in a vision, with John's vision of the scroll sealed with 7 seals in Revelation 5, which God handed over to the Lamb who was slaughtered that it would finally be opened and it's contents revealed. So essentially Revelation chapter 5 is a fulfillment of Daniel 12:4; although we must acknowledge that it is only a partial fulfillment because even though the contents are being revealed to John, the actions the content describes have yet to happen.

Since we only got a little way into Revelation 5 let's re-read it all to get our feet set.

RE-READ REVELATION CHAPTER 5 all

The mighty angel of verse 2 is, himself, unable to unseal the scroll that God holds. This tells us of the extraordinary nature of this sealed document. In fact verse 3 informs us that no one in Heaven is able to open it. Not even the powerful Seraphim who stay so intimately close to God, guarding His throne, are worthy of the honor. No one on earth is worthy, either; thus no powerful ruler, no holy man, prophet, or sage whether gentile or Hebrew....no one of the human race.... is deemed worthy. And finally no one UNDER the earth can open it; that is, no one from the realm of the dead, which is also where demons are thought to live. Thus not even Satan, the most powerful demon, is worthy and able to receive the sealed document or even look inside of it to know its contents. Let that thought sink in for a minute. Up until the moment that the vision of the contents of the scroll was revealed to John in the early 90's A.D., only

God and Daniel knew what was written. Only they knew the terrifying, catastrophic events that would mark the end of history but the beginning of the final redemption of planet earth and its inhabitants. But once the vision was given and John wrote it down, Satan and his minions found out; the Seraphim found out; the angels found out; and those among humanity who trust God's Word found out. Over the next several weeks, you too will know the sobering truth.

How should we take what we will learn? We read in Daniel that knowing the contents of the book or scroll made Daniel physically ill. Knowing how important the contents were made John cry uncontrollably because there seemed to be no one who was worthy to unseal the information. So to say that the contents of this scroll with 7 seals is unsettling is an understatement. But unsealing the scroll was more than only about KNOWING the future; it was essentially the inaugural event that would bring it about. However John's crying turns to elation as one of the 24 Elders says that indeed there is someone who has won the right to unseal the scroll: the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David.

This description of the worthy party directly connects that person to Israel; he was a member of one of the 12 tribes: Judah. We first read of a similar description of this person in a verse that even the Rabbis acknowledge is Messianic: it is from Genesis 49.

Genesis 49:9-12 CJB ⁹ *Y'hudah is a lion's cub; my son, you stand over the prey. He crouches down and stretches like a lion; like a lioness, who dares to provoke him?* ¹⁰ *The scepter will not pass from Y'hudah, nor the ruler's staff from between his legs, until he comes to whom [obedience] belongs;* and it is he whom the peoples will obey.*

¹¹ *Tying his donkey to the vine, his donkey's colt to the choice grapevine, he washes his clothes in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes.* ¹² *His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.*

While it might seem so because the phrase "the Lion of Judah" is so well known among Christians, written into countless songs, and is especially beloved among Evangelical and Hebrew Roots Believers, you might think that it is present in numerous places in the New Testament. In fact this one mention in Revelation 5 is the only time in the entire Bible that the title "the Lion of Judah" is found. Further where we read in Revelation 5:5 that this Lion of Judah is also identified as the Root of David, this also is the first time we hear the term "Root of David" said in the Bible, even though it might seem otherwise. Rather in other places in the Bible what we find is that the Messiah is not said to be of the Root of David but rather of the Root of Jesse; Jesse is David's father.

CJB Isaiah 11:10 *On that day the root of Yishai, which stands as a banner for the peoples—the Goyim will seek him out, and the place where he rests will be glorious.*

So even though a name STILL is not given to us, the Messiah is identified as being from a specific tribe of Israel...Judah....and from a specific family of Judah....that of Jesse's son, King David. We should also notice that Messiah Yeshua is assigned attributes very much in the manner and circumstance of Moses. Whereas Moses is given tablets from God that only he can receive, Yeshua is given a scroll with 7 seals. Both men are expected to announce the

contents of those documents to God's people. This comports with the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:15 - 19.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 CJB ¹⁵ *"ADONAI will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among yourselves, from your own kinsmen. You are to pay attention to him, ¹⁶ just as when you were assembled at Horev and requested ADONAI your God, 'Don't let me hear the voice of ADONAI my God any more, or let me see this great fire ever again; if I do, I will die!'*

¹⁷ *On that occasion ADONAI said to me, 'They are right in what they are saying. ¹⁸ I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kinsmen. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I order him. ¹⁹ Whoever doesn't listen to my words, which he will speak in my name, will have to account for himself to me.*

So this passage in Deuteronomy lends weight that Lamb of Revelation 5 is the "prophet like Moses" that comes not from gentiles, but from Israel.

Verse 6 explains that John's vision now unveils that the Lamb that appears to be slaughtered came forward and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. Thus between what is said in verses 5 and 6 we understand that the Lion of Judah (of the root of Jesse) and the Lamb who was slaughtered are the same person. But now we have a conundrum; one that has bothered and divided the Rabbis for centuries. Although it is not directly from the Book of Revelation that the conundrum arises for Jews but rather from the Scriptures that Revelation alludes to, we find that the Messiah is at once a Lion and a Lamb. From the world of nature this is making the predator also the prey. From the world of Judaism it is making the fierce one also meek and vulnerable, and the warrior as also the sacrifice.

The allusion to the Lamb that is slaughtered comes from Isaiah 53. It is one of the most amazing, spot-on prophecies that includes details making Yeshua's identification as the subject of this passage unmistakable; He is the Messiah.

Isaiah 53:7-10 CJB ⁷ *Though mistreated, he was submissive- he did not open his mouth. Like a lamb led to be slaughtered, like a sheep silent before its shearers, he did not open his mouth. ⁸ After forcible arrest and sentencing, he was taken away; and none of his generation protested his being cut off from the land of the living for the crimes of my people, who deserved the punishment themselves.*

⁹ *He was given a grave among the wicked; in his death he was with a rich man. Although he had done no violence and had said nothing deceptive, ¹⁰ yet it pleased ADONAI to crush him with illness, to see if he would present himself as a guilt offering. If he does, he will see his offspring; and he will prolong his days; and at his hand ADONAI's desire will be accomplished.*

Yet despite these details that fit Yeshua's final hours to a tee, most Rabbis insist that this prophecy is not about Yeshua nor about any Messiah. Rather this is describing the nation of Israel. That is, Israel is the lamb led to be slaughtered. I can only surmise that the reason that

Rabbis choose such an interpretation is because any other would surely lead them to the reality that the Messiah of Christianity, Jesus, is the Messiah that God had sent first and foremost to Israel. But now Israel, and Judaism, insist upon waiting for another and different Messiah; one that will never come.

In John's vision the Lamb is standing near God's throne as part of the inner circle (if you would) that consists of the 24 Elders and the 4 living beings... the Seraphim. The thing to be most noticed about this Lamb is simply that he is alive! How can a slaughtered Lamb now be alive? It is only possible through the miracle of resurrection. Even more, Christ's characteristic as being that of a Lion only happened in the most cosmically ironic way: by means of His being slaughtered as a Lamb. I don't want us to miss this vital connection so please give me all your attention. The means by which Christ overcame in order to become the divine conqueror was through His death (and later His resurrection); this is exactly the same scenario, and fate, that awaits His disciples.... Believers in all ages. This leads us back to what I've mentioned a couple of times, now, in our study of this Apocalypse; it is that in the Old Testament God delivered His oppressed people from death but in the New Testament God delivers His oppressed people **through** death. Thus it was through His death as the slaughtered Lamb that Christ overcame to win the victory that gave Him, and only Him, the right to stand before God in Heaven and open the sealed scroll of Revelation 5.

At the same time we saw throughout Revelation chapters 2 and 3 (the letters to the 7 churches) that God's admonition to the Believers at these congregations was always to be overcomers (of sin and/or tribulation) in order to become conquerors who win the victory. What was the reward for Believers winning the victory as stated in those 7 letters? It was not being rewarded in material or temporal things that happen in this present life, on earth; rather the pattern was that the divine rewards for the victory of overcomers spoken of in each of the 7 letters meant receiving them **after** our physical death. In letter 1, the reward is that we'll be able to eat from the Tree of Life (meaning we enter into eternal life as opposed to eternal destruction). In letter 2, we won't be hurt by the second death (the 2nd death can only happen after our 1st death). In letter 3, we'll receive a new name that is inscribed on white stone (represents a not-guilty verdict for our sins and therefore our permission to enter the Kingdom of God). In letter 4, we're rewarded with rule over the nations (during the Millennium). In letter 5, we'll be given white garments (that is, we'll imbued with perfect purity, which is available only in Heaven). In letter 6, we'll be kept from the time of trial coming upon the whole world (we won't experience the trial because we won't be physically alive to experience it). In letter 7, we'll sit with Messiah on His throne (again, something that clearly happens only during the Millennium and only to the resurrected Saints who return from Heaven with Him). I'll say it again so that you don't misunderstand: notice that every one of these rewards for Believers who overcome (as written in the letters to the 7 Believing congregations in Asia) is not meant to indicate what we receive during our present lives or in this present age, but rather what happens **THROUGH** our death, and only **AFTER** our death and resurrection, just as it was for Yeshua; and some of it is received after the end of the present age, in the Millennial age.

This Lamb that was slain but is now alive also had the strange appearance of having 7 horns and 7 eyes, which John says is the seven-fold spirit of God. Remember that the number 7 can carry the sense of finality; that is, finality meaning something that is completely finished and

nothing can be, nor does it need to be, added or subtracted. Rather, the state at which it has arrived has achieved a perfect wholeness. Thus this abundance of sevens that we find from beginning to end in Revelation indeed signals the end of a long process that will never again be revisited or repeated. So we must think of all the sevens we encounter both in their individual and collective terms. Collectively the profuse amount of sevens signal finality...a perfect end. Taken individually each use of the number seven has a little different sense to it. Biblically, horns speak of power and kings; 7 is the ideal number that speaks of divine influence. Thus the Lamb with 7 horns is symbolic of divinely given power that is perfect and cannot be defeated. The 7 eyes are a bit more complex and they seem to be a direct allusion to Zechariah chapters 3 and 4. The last half of Revelation 5:6 is very difficult and so are Zechariah chapters 3 and 4; we'll do our best to make sense of it but it is complicated.

The context for the Zechariah passages that John is alluding to is that God is addressing the current High Priest of Israel, Joshua, about the issue of rebuilding the Temple immediately following the Babylonian exile. Without reading the entirety of those Zechariah chapters, the pertinent verses say this:

Zechariah. 3:6-9 CJB ⁶ *Then the angel of ADONAI gave Y'hoshua this warning:* ⁷ *"ADONAI-Tzva'ot says this: 'If you will walk in my ways, obey my commission, judge my house and guard my courtyards; then I will give you free access among these who are standing here.*

⁸ *Listen, cohen gadol Y'hoshua, both you and your colleagues seated here before you, because these men are a sign that I am going to bring my servant Tzemach [Sprout].* ⁹ *For look at the stone I have put in front of Y'hoshua: on one stone are seven eyes; I will engrave what is to be written on it,' says ADONAI-Tzva'ot; 'and I will remove the guilt of this land in one day.*

So in this passage the 7 eyes set on the stone before Joshua the High Priest are in some mystical way related to the removing of guilt from the land of Israel, and the guilt removal will happen in one day. But also notice that the rebuilding of the Temple serves as a sign and symbol that one day God is going to bring His servant **Tzemach** (**Tzemach** means branch or sprout). This is a Messianic prophecy as it points to the branch or sprout that comes from Jesse, father of David. Therefore the 7 eyes involve some process of the Messiah removing Israel's guilt by the only legal means available: a sacrifice of atonement at a time when the Temple is standing and operational.

But then in Zechariah 4, continuing on with the same scene and biblical characters as in Zechariah chapter 3, we read:

^{CJB} **Zechariah 4:1** *Then the angel that had been speaking with me returned and roused me, as if he were waking someone up from being asleep,* ² *and asked me, "What do you see?" I answered, "I've been looking at a menorah; it's all of gold, with a bowl at its top, seven lamps on it, and seven tubes leading to the lamps at its top.*

Then a little farther into Zechariah 4: ^{CJB} **Zechariah 4:10** ¹⁰ *For even someone who doesn't*

think much of a day when such minor events take place will rejoice at seeing the plumbline in the hand of Z'rubavel. So these seven are the eyes of ADONAI that range about over all the earth."

So in Zechariah 4, the 7 eyes are said to symbolize the 7 lamps and these 7 eyes are for the purpose of allowing God to see what is going on over all the earth. Thus in this case the 7 eyes symbolically represent God's complete knowledge, and nothing can be hidden from Him. If we bring this understanding across to Revelation 5:6, then the meaning is something along the lines of the Lamb that was slain (but is now alive through resurrection) holds complete power (the 7 horns) as well as possesses complete knowledge (the 7 eyes) of everything that happens throughout the earth. Since God has given His Son Yeshua a Kingdom to rule that consists of the earth and everything that exists upon it, and every activity that occurs upon it, then it would follow that Messiah would have to have complete power and complete knowledge over that Kingdom. And that is exactly what we see here.

But now the issue of the 7 spirits of God again arises. I know we've discussed this before (probably more than you've wanted to) and I've told you that in Jewish thought of that day there was a belief that 7 named archangels were near to God, and served Him, in Heaven, and this is what is being spoken about. Another possibility is that it is referring to the complete work of the Holy Spirit; and it is my opinion that this is likely what is being referred to. However there was yet another mainstream Jewish thought in the 1st century A.D. about this matter that we can't discount and we'll take just a moment to discuss it.

In non-biblical Jewish books such as 1 Enoch, we find many references to the Jewish Son of Man traditions (which we've talked about rather extensively), in which we also repeatedly encounter yet another strange and difficult phrase, "the Lord of Spirits." For example, we read in 1 Enoch 46:1-2: ***"There I beheld the Ancient of Days, whose head was like white wool, and with him another, whose countenance resembled that of a man... Then I inquired of one of the angels, who went with me, and who showed me every secret thing, concerning this Son of Man: who he was; whence he was; and why he accompanied the Ancient of Days. He answered and said to me, This is the Son of Man, to whom righteousness belongs; with whom righteousness has dwelt; and who will reveal all the treasures of that which is concealed: for the Lord of Spirits has chosen him; and his portion has surpassed all before the Lord of Spirits in everlasting uprightness."***

This common phrase found in the book of Enoch – "the Lord of Spirits" – may possibly be connected with, or even mean the same, as the "seven spirits who are before his throne" found in our passage in Revelation. But even if that were so, it still doesn't give us a very clear picture of what or who these Spirits are and what their function is. But rest easy; just because John saw this vision and communicated it to us doesn't mean that he understood it all. I think in some ways the passage of time has actually given modern Believers certain insights into these visions that were not available to John; but not into everything. Much of what was mystery to John remains mystery to us, and I think this matter of the 7 spirits (or the sevenfold spirit) of God is just going to have to remain mysterious for us as well. So from here on when we encounter this term, because I've given you about as much information as exists on the subject, we'll just move on.

So as we move on to verse 7 let's sum it up as simply as we can: in John's vision of Revelation 5 the Lion of the tribe of Judah is also called the Root David, and is also called the Lamb that was slaughtered. Any and all of these terms and their abbreviations that we'll confront in the remainder of Revelation are referring to the risen Christ who is currently residing at God's right hand in Heaven. That also means that when I use one of these terms I am referring only to the resurrected Yeshua the Messiah. So in verse 7 the Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of God the Father who was seated on His throne because the Lamb was the only being, spiritual or physical, found worthy to take it and open it. And when He took the scroll the same 4 living beings and the same 24 Elders that surrounded and worshipped God now fell down and worshipped the Lamb. This confirms that the Lamb is divine because ONLY the divine is to be worshipped. This all folds back to Daniel 7 where we read:

Daniel 7:13-14 CJB ¹³ "I kept watching the night visions, when I saw, coming with the clouds of heaven, someone like a son of man. He approached the Ancient One and was led into his presence.

¹⁴ To him was given rulership, glory and a kingdom, so that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him. His rulership is an eternal rulership that will not pass away; and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

So since in Daniel the being who approached the Ancient One (God the Father) is called "someone like a son of man", and it was he who was given an eternal kingdom and rule over it, then we can see from Revelation 5 that the one "like the son of man" must therefore be divine because clearly he is the same as the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, and the Lamb that was slain. This may not sound all that important or news worthy to a 21st century gentile Christian, but to a Hebrew speaking Jew of most any era this connection is vital because in Hebrew when one is identifying someone or something as a human the term used translates literally to English as "son of man"; **ben adam** in Hebrew or **bar enosh** in Aramaic; there is no term called "human being". Thus in Daniel's vision, according to the modern English, it was someone like a human being standing before the throne of God. However what we just read in Revelation helps us understand that He was a divine human known in Daniel as Son of Man who also goes by the titles in Revelation 5 as the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, and the Lamb that was slain. Let me again sum it up because this critical to your understanding as we proceed in the Book of Revelation. The Son of Man is the same person as the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, and the Lamb that was slain, and all of these are referring to the Messiah Yeshua.

We're told in verse 8 that each one of the 24 Elders held a harp and gold bowls filed with incense; and that the pieces of incense in the bowls were the prayers of God's people. This, to my mind, more than confirms my contention that the 24 Elders represents the 24 courses of Levites and Priests that had served God's Temple in Jerusalem since the time of Solomon. These Levites and Priests were Israelites and not gentiles, and it is no different in Heaven. One of the jobs of Levites was to play music in the Temple during certain occasions, and the harp was one of the common instruments that was used. In fact, today in Israel the Temple Institute has already constructed the harps needed for when the Temple is rebuilt and the Priesthood is reconstituted. The incense bowls were handled only by the Temple priests, and

even on earth the incense was said to represent the prayers of God's people. So to imagine that these 24 Elders along with the harps and golden bowls of incense were any other than a course of Israelite Levites and Priests, Believers all, collapses under the weight of the evidence.

Verse 9 is a hymn that is sung by the 24 Elders (another standard duty of the Levites in the Jerusalem Temple was to sing hymns, which were mostly Psalms). This song is called a "new song" because it is all about the current event of the Lamb being deemed worthy to take the sealed scroll and opening it. In most respects the song merely repeats and sums up what we have been learning. That is: it is only the Lamb who is worthy to open the scroll and this because he won the right through his own death. Because the wages of sin is death, and atonement for sin bears a cost, it is by the price of the Lamb's blood that all the people of the earth from every race, ethnicity, tribe, or nation, gentile or Hebrew, were ransomed for God. And for those who Believed and were ransomed they were transformed into a kingdom for God to rule, and are to be as priests for him, and meant to rule along with him.

This song reminds us of what God promised Israel so long ago while they still wandered the Wilderness. In Exodus 19 we hear this:

Exodus 19:3-6 CJB ³ *Moshe went up to God, and ADONAI called to him from the mountain: "Here is what you are to say to the household of Ya'akov, to tell the people of Isra'el: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.*

⁵ *Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.'* *These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra'el."*

Although I have addressed this before, I want to again debunk a rather ubiquitous Christian myth that all Believers (mostly gentiles) are now priests, and will remain so in Heaven, and that we have replaced the Levites as God's Priesthood. Notice in this Exodus passage that God says that Israel will be separated away from all the nations (meaning gentile nations) and will be a kingdom of priests for Him. This absolutely did NOT mean that all Israelites, no matter how well they kept the Covenant of Moses, would become priests. In fact only certain members from one specific tribe...the tribe of Levi...would go on to become God's official priests. All the other tribes were excluded from being part of the Priesthood. Therefore to say that all Israel would become a kingdom of priests is merely to say that all Israel would be accepted by God as His worthy servants. But that is entirely different than a specific group from the tribe of Levi that would form the God-ordained Priesthood that would serve God in an official capacity at His official sanctuary.

So it is when "the Church" is called priests. As Believers in Yeshua God sees us as having become worthy to serve Him. But that in no way means that we have become a Priesthood that in some way replaces the Temple Priesthood of Levites that is going to be restored, nor will it apply to what occurs in the Millennial Kingdom, and not even in Heaven.

Lesson 13 - Revelation 5

We'll pick up with verse 10 and complete chapter 5 next time.