

The Book

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Revelation 5:1-13

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Now I want you to get your Bible today and turn to the book of Revelation. I would like to bring you a message from Revelation chapter five. Now here is the title of the message. I call this message "The Book," just the book. And I am going to go verse by verse here in Revelation chapter five beginning with verse one.

Now this chapter contains three divisions. First of all you will see the sealed book in the hand of God. And then you will see the opening of the book by our Lord Jesus Christ. And then, thirdly, you will see the great universal joy that the opening of the book brought among the people in the kingdom of God.

Now there is the book and there is the opening of the book by the Lord Jesus Christ and there is the great universal joy that the opening of the book brought to the people of God.

Now let's look at verse one. If you will listen, I believe we will learn something today. In Revelation chapter five verse one, "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside and sealed with seven seals."

Now the first thing I notice is the place where the book is. It is in the hand of him who sat on the throne. Now, this is God the Father. Not to the exclusion of the Son and the Holy Spirit, for there are three that bear record in heaven. There is the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost and these three are one.

But John, back in the preceding chapter wrote, "Immediately I was in the Spirit and behold a throne was set in heaven. And one sat upon that throne."

I believe this is God the Father. And I am sure that you will as we go along and look at the rest of this chapter.

Now there was a book, a book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne. And that book was written within and on the back side. Now the manner of writing back in those days, back when John was on the Isle of Patmos writing this testimony, the manner of writing was on sheets of parchment which were rolled into a cylinder. You have seen that in pictures. And a book was called a volume or a book was called a roll or a scroll.

Now Ezekiel will help us on that. In Ezekiel chapter two verse nine Ezekiel wrote,

“When I looked behold a hand was set before me. And lo a roll of a book was therein. And he spread it before me. He spread the role, the scroll, the book before me and was written within and without.”

So very similar here. There is one on the throne. In his right hand is a book. And it is written within and on the backside and it says the book was sealed with seven seals.

Now what is written in this awesome book in the right hand of the Father? Some say it contains all the types and the pictures and the prophecies of the Old Testament. But I don't believe that is what the book contains because men like David and Moses, they were familiar with the book of the Old Testament and the prophecies and the pictures and the types. And Moses wrote much of the Old Testament. David wrote nearly all of the book of the Psalms and these people saw the things written therein. So that wouldn't be a book closed to everybody, the Old Testament pictures and types.

And then some people say that the book contains the New Testament gospels which is sealed as far as the natural man is concerned. The natural man, the Scripture says, receiveth not the things that are written because they are foolishness to him.

But God's people see them and understand them. And the apostles and those who followed after them actually taught men the New Testament. And God gave men the understanding of the New Testament. So this book written within and on the backside, in the hand of God on the throne is not the Old Testament. And it is not the New Testament.

If you will listen, I will tell you what this book is. This book and its contents are known only to God, only to God. Nobody else knows what is in this book but God at this time. And this book in the hand of him who sits on the throne is the book of God's own decrees. It is the book of God's purpose. This is the book of God's eternal kingdom, all the future, all events, all that God will do concerning the new heavens and the new earth and he kingdom of his dear Son. This book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals in the hand of God on his throne is the book of God's decrees, God's purpose and God's kingdom.

It is written long before it is opened and revealed. It is written before the foundation of the world. In Isaiah chapter 46 verse nine he says, “I am God. There is none else. I am God. There is none like me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done saying, my counsel, my decrees, my purpose shall stand. I will do all my pleasure. I have spoken. I will bring it to pass. I have purposed it. I will do it.”

And then in Acts chapter 15 verse 18 the apostle said, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning, decreed, designed, purposed, spoken, declared. All of God's purposes from the beginning of the world, all future events, the kingdom of Christ, eternal life, heaven, new earth.”

In Romans 4:17 it says God quickens the dead and calls those things which be not as though they were. That is what this book is.

John said, "I saw a book in the right hand of him that sat on the throne written within and without, sealed with seven seals."

And this book, its contents known only to God, is a revelation of God's eternal covenant of grace.

You have read in the Scriptures about the everlasting covenant and Christ is the shepherd of the sheep of the blood of the everlasting covenant. It is God's covenant of grace, mercy and glory for sinners. And this book contains the whole of God's decrees, his mercy, his grace and his glory. As John said, "The things that were, the things that are and the things that shall be according to his divine purpose."

But the book is sealed. It is sealed with seven seals which carries several meanings. Now listen to me carefully. The book is sealed. Why is it sealed? Well, it is sealed because it is complete. It is a completed plan. It is a completed purpose. It is a completed covenant. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning. So all of them are in this book, all of God's works concerning all events and all creatures and their...and their future is in his book.

It is sealed, secondly, because it is unchangeable. Nothing can be added and nothing taken away. What God does is forever. So it is unchangeable.

And then it is sealed because it is perfect. How many seals? Seven seals. What's the number seven? It is the number of perfection. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man the things God has prepared for them that love him. But he knows. He has purposed it. He has sealed the book.

It is complete. It is unchangeable. It is perfect. And listen now carefully. Listen. It is sealed because it is waiting. This book is waiting the revelation of the of the only one who can open it, the only one who can open this book, the only one who can fulfill what is written in this book, the only one who can bring to pass every promise, every purpose, every decree and every mercy for every sinner. This book is sealed. It is in the hand of God. Known only to God are all his works. But he knows them. And it is perfect. It is unchangeable. It is complete. And this book is sealed, waiting for the only one who can open it.

For look at verse two now. That's all....that's what verse one says. Now verse two. "And I saw," John said, "a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open this book and to loose the seals thereof? Who is worthy?'"

Who is of such holiness that he can approach God's throne? Tell me. Who is of such holiness that he can come and take this book and open it? Who is of such equality with God, such power and worth that he can take the book out of the hand of God? He has got

to take it out of the hand of God to open it. Who by his knowledge and wisdom can unseal the book, bring its purposes to pass, bring its promises into effect and then explain it, the mysteries of this book to you and me? Who can obey every precept? Who can pay every debt? Who can defeat every enemy? There are a lot of enemies to the accomplishment of God's purpose? Who can remove every obstacle of the law and justice? Who can find every sheep? Who can bring back every prodigal son? Who can enable a just God to be righteous, holy and yet merciful and embrace sinners and accept them, each one? Who is worthy? That is the question. There is the book All of the purposes, the new heaven, the new earth, salvation eternal life, eternal glory, happiness, no pain, no tears, no death, no sorrow, eternal life. It is the hands decreed. It is in the hands of God. And it is sealed. Who can open it?

That is what the angel asked.

Well, verse three, the question is answered. "And no man, no man in heaven or in earth, neither under the earth was able to open the book or even look thereon."

No one in heaven, not an angel, not a seraphim, not a cherubim, not a departed spirit, nobody. No one on earth, none of this so called wise and prudent and religious and pious. None of them can approach the throne. No one under the earth. That is all creatures, no one, no one was found worthy.

Well, shall the book of God's purpose remain sealed? Shall the book of God's promises and God's covenant and mercy remain closed? Well, I will tell you. If it is left up to you or left up to me or to anyone in heaven, earth or hell it will stay closed.

And verse four John said, "And I wept. I wept much because no man was found worthy to open the book, to reveal the contents of the book or to take away the seals." No one was found worthy.

Look at verse five. Here comes the good news. Here comes the gospel. Here comes the one whose very person and work this book is built upon and around. "One of the elders said to me as I wept. He said, 'Weep not. Weep not. Weep not. There is one worthy.'"

Why is God doing this to John? Why is God showing this to John?

Well, I believe I know the reason. I believe there are three things that need to be rehearsed over and over again here and here, three things that need to be rehearsed over and over again. And this is what God is doing to John here on the Isle of Patmos. Number one, the book, it is God's book. The book is God's great purpose and glory in his kingdom which he hath prepared for his people through his Son Jesus Christ. This book truly exists, the covenant of mercy. It truly exists.

Secondly, we need to have rehearsed over and over again to us that the total spiritual impotence and depravity of every creature prevents any man from opening the book or ap-

proaching the throne. No man is worthy, never has been, is not now and never will be. That needs to be rehearsed over and over again. No man is worthy.

And, thirdly, thirdly is the excellency and glory and power of the Son who is worthy. And here it comes. Listen. “Weep not. Weep not,” the elder said, “A ransom has been found. Weep not, for the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”

Who is this? The Lion of the tribe of Judah. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who came from the tribe of Judah.

When Jacob was blessing his sons on Genesis 49, this was his prophecy. He said, “Judah is a lion’s whelp. Judah is an old lion. And the scepter shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh comes. And here he is, the Lion of the tribe of Judah.”

Our Lord is called a Lamb for his humility and for his obedience and for his sacrifice. But he is called a Lion for his power and strength and authority. Here comes the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is worthy.

And then it says, further, identifying him, he is the root of David. The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed to open the book and loose the seals thereof. He is the seed of Abraham. He is the Lion of Judah. He is the family of Jesse. He is the Son of David. He is the Son of God.

Now watch verse six. And John said, “I beheld. I beheld and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a lamb as it had been slain.”

You see Christ our Redeemer is in the midst of the throne. He is God. He is with God. And by him all things were made. That is the way John started his gospel book. He said, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and all things were made by him.”

So he is revealed to John as the Lamb in the midst of the throne.

Secondly, he is revealed as the Lamb, a Lamb stood in the midst of the throne. The Pass-over Lamb, the sacrificial Lamb.

And then he appears as the Lamb slain. How did John know he was the Lamb slain? Because he bears the marks of the cross. Even in heaven our Lord bears the marks of the cross.

You know, when he arose from the tomb and his disciples, he came to the upper room where they were assembled and they were afraid. They thought that they had seen a ghost. And our Lord said, “It is I myself.” He said, “Behold my hands. Behold my feet.”

Well, you know, anybody could say, "Behold my hands and feet." But our Lord Jesus held forth hands that had a scar, nail prints and feet that had nail prints. And he bears the scars of the cross.

So John said, "I saw a lamb as it had been slain in the midst of the throne and having," watch this now, "seven horns, seven eyes and the seven spirits of God."

I told you that word "seven" that number seven is perfection. And this lamb who is worthy to open the book, the book is written about him and his person and his work. This book is sealed waiting his coming to open the book. But he is the lamb in the midst of the throne. He is God and was with God. And he bears the marks of the cross. And he has seven horns in the Old Testament.

Well, a Lamb doesn't have horns, but it is figurative language. For in the Old Testament horns means power. When it talks about the horn of the king that is the power of the king. And this lamb seven horns, perfect power, all power, almighty power, omnipotence.

And he has seven eyes. Eyes are knowledge. Eyes are understanding. Eyes are being able to see into the thoughts of men and all things. Our Lord has seven eyes. He is omniscient. He knows everything, this lamb.

And then he has seven spirits. The seven spirits of God. That's eternal presence, omnipresence. Our Lord is everywhere. "I am with you always, even to the end of the earth."

So I saw an angel, he said, "Who is worthy to open the book?"

No man was found worthy. And I wept much. And the elder said, "Don't weep, John." And I looked in the midst of the throne was a lamb as it had been slain with seven eyes, seven horns and seven spirits. And he came. Now watch this. He came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne. He came willingly, deliberately, boldly, this lion of the tribe of Judah, this Lamb as it had been slain, this seed of David, this Son of David came and took that book willingly just like he took our nature on himself. Not the nature of angels, but the nature as the seed of Abraham.

Like he took our sins in his body on the tree and like he took our place and gave us his, numbered with the transgressors and gave us life everlasting.

Well, he came and he took the book out of the right hand of the Father, the book of purpose, the book of the covenant, the book of the kingdom, the book of all of God's eternal plans. He didn't ask for it. He took it. He didn't ask for it. Because as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, this book is written of him. All of these decrees has to do with him and his person and his work. And all these purposes of God and the victory and the glory and the eternal life is accomplished by him. Without him there is no book.

Do you see what I am saying? Without him there is no book. It is all about him. It is...he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. He redeemed us in Christ. He accepted us in the beloved. It is all in Christ. That's right. Do you see this?

The Lamb came and took the book from the hand of the Father. And verse five says, watch this. "He hath prevailed. He hath prevailed. He hath travailed to open this book." Doesn't it tell you something? To loose these seals he hat prevailed.

If you will just go back over his life he was made of a woman, born of a woman. The Scripture said, "God in the fulness of time sent his Son made of a woman." Nine months in the womb, then born among poor people, laid in a manger, in the straw, no room for him in the inn.

He brew up in a carpenter shop. He was circumcised when he was eight days old. He fulfilled all the laws that are written, perfectly obeyed every law. He grew up in a carpenter shop.

He was despised and rejected of men. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was tempted in all points like as we are and yet without sin. He walked this earth in the flesh. He hungered. He thirsted. He was weary. He was tried, tempted in all points. He obeyed every prophecy. He prevailed. Where you and I failed, he prevailed. Where every man and every creature has failed, our Lord prevailed. He obeyed the law of holiness perfectly. He went to the cross of Calvary and there he suffered and bled and died. And he was buried, buried in a tomb. And he rose again. And then he ascended to the right hand of the Father as our great high priest.

But Christ being come—listen to Hebrews nine. "But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, that is his own body. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He arose he ascended to heaven and there at the right hand of God he ever lives to make intercession for you and me.

Now watch verse eight through 12. That's the book, the decrees of God, the covenant of God, the eternal purpose of God, all that will be in the kingdom of God. And the only one able to take the book and open it prevailed to open the book and accomplish all that God required of us perfectly, perfection. He satisfied the law. He honored the law. He satisfied the justice of God. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

"And when he had taken the book," listen. "When he had taken the book," verse eight, "everybody fell down before the Lamb. Everybody in heaven fell down before the Lamb and they sang...and they sang a new song saying, 'Thou art worthy. Thou art worthy. No one else is worthy. Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seals. For thou wast slain and thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.'" Watch it now. "Out of every kindred, every tongue, every people and every nation. And thou hast made us unto our God both kings and priests. And we shall reign on the new earth. We shall reign in heaven and on the new earth because he opened the book. He prevailed to open the book."

So they said, “Worthy, is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom, strength, honor and glory.”

Here is the conclusion. Verse 13. “And every creature which is in heaven, the new heaven,” there will be a new heaven and a new earth. Every creature in the new heaven and on the new earth and under the earth and such as are in the seas and all [?] I heard them singing one song. I heard them declaring one glorious truth. For he must have all preeminence. All hail the power of Jesus’ name, let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem and crown him Lord of all. God hath given him a name greater, higher than every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, earth and under the earth. And every voice shall proclaim, every tongue shall declare that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”

And here is the song. “Blessing, honor, glory and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne. And unto the Lamb forever and forever. Worthy is the Lamb.”

The book? God’s decrees. The only one worthy to open it, the Lord Jesus Christ. And when he opened it, prevailed to open it and prevailed to accomplish everything written therein, a great song was sung in heaven and earth, “Worthy is the Lamb.”

You want this message? It is called “The Book. The Book.” Write for it. Send two dollars and we will mail it to you. Until we meet again may God bless you everyone.