

The Scroll & The Lamb – Revelation 5:1-7

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Some Sweet Real Estate Deals*

1. There have been some sweet real estate deals throughout history
2. One that almost every American grade school students learns about was the Dutch purchase of the Manhattan from the Native Americans
 - a. Peter Minuit, the leader of the Dutch colony of New Netherland, purchased the island in 1626 for goods valued at about \$24. ^[1]
 - b. not bad when you consider that today the island of Manhattan is some of the most expensive real estate on the entire planet and is the financial center of the world.
3. Or we think of what was known at one time as *Seward's Folly* – Alaska.
 - a. in 1867, William Seward, who was Secretary of State, finally convinced Congress to shovel out \$7 million to purchase Alaska from the Russians. ^[2]
 - b. the press had a heyday with the story, calling Alaska *Seward's Icebox & Walrussia* because they thought it unfit for human occupation and the haunt only of walruses.
 - c. but 30 years later Alaska was crawling with gold miners and now we know the vast mineral & natural resources of the state.
4. Just recently it was reported in our local newspaper that Ventura County is the second most expensive place to buy a home in Southern California.
 - a. how many people are kicking themselves today because they drove through the area 30 years ago when there was little here,
 - b. and as they drive through it *now* - wish they'd bought land?
5. Then – every so often you hear about someone who purchased land, only to discover they couldn't use it – it was *worthless*.
 - a. more and more people buy land to discover it's the breeding ground of some rare species and the environmentalists are all up in arms, stalling any development.
 - b. or someone used the land as a dump site and the ground's been contaminated and can't be used for another 100 years.
 - c. or city regulations prohibit it's use for the reason the owner bought it
 - d. on and on it goes with people sometimes spending their entire life savings, only to discover they have no control over their own land.

B. *History's Greatest Real Estate Deal*

1. We're taking a look today at *History's Great Real Estate Deal*.
2. And it's one that each of us has a vital stake in – because it has to do with a plot of land called "Earth."

II. TEXT

A. V. 1

¹And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

1. John is in heaven at this point. After the messages to the 7 churches of chapters 2 & 3, he's called up to heaven to see things from the divine perspective.
 - a. he's about to be given visions of the judgments that will fall on Earth in the Last days.
 - b. in light of all he's about to see, he might jump to the conclusion that everything's out of control

- c. so God begins by giving him a vision of His throne, laying the framework for understanding that things are NOT out of control – *God* is in control.
- d. it's my desire, and I believe the desire of the Spirit that this message be an encouragement to you today.
 - 1) as we listen to the news we can become anxious and worked up about what's going to happen
 - 2) Kashmir, the Middle East, terrorism, the economy, new diseases
 - 3) to say nothing of our marriage, kids, work, school.
 - 4) then we hear the tragic news of this 14 year old girl who is kidnapped at gun-point right out of her own bedroom and we wonder if we're even safe in our own homes!!!!!!
 - 5) when our world, both globally and in our own town and neighborhood, seems to be spinning out of control,
 - 6) we need to be reminded that God is still on His throne!
 - 7) in the midst of all the anxiety, all the confusion, all the chaos, we need to get a vision of the throne of God and realize that He is sovereign—
 - 8) and no matter how dark it gets, He has promised to work all things together for good for those who love Him and are the called according to His purpose.
- 2. As John watches, he sees God holding a scroll in His right hand – the hand of authority and power.
- 3. The way it's described, we realize this is an *unusual* scroll.
 - a. most scrolls were written only on one side and bound with a single seal.
 - b. scrolls written on both sides and sealed with 7 seals were a special kind of *legal document* ^[3] -- a *title deed* to a piece of property. ^[4]
- 4. A little background is needed here . . .
 - a. when God gave Canaan to the people of Israel, He told them it was to remain theirs *perpetually*.
 - b. divided up and allotted to the various tribes and families, it could not be bought or sold but had to remain within the family's inheritance *forever*. ^[5]
 - c. the land could be leased *out*, but only for a maximum of 6 years; in the 7th it had to revert to the owner.
 - d. if a person fell into debt, his land could be used by his creditors for a maximum of six years, but again, in the 7th it had to be given back to the owner.
- 5. Along with the land went a title-deed that spelled out the boundaries of the land and family's right to possess it; that's what was written on the *inside* of the scroll.
- 6. But if the owner fell into debt and had to relinquish his fields to his creditors,
 - a. then they would take the title deed and write on the *outside* of it the terms for repayment of the debt so the land could be reclaimed.
 - b. 7 seals would then be placed on the scroll, marking the 7 years the land would be forfeit till it could be reclaimed if the repayment terms weren't met.
- 7. But God made one other provision in the Law of Moses for the reclaiming of lands lost through debt.
 - a. if a person was unable to repay --
 - b. then a close relative who had the wherewithal could come and claim the land on his behalf and restore it to him free and clear. ^[6]
 - c. this relative was called the *kinsman-redeemer*. ^[7]
 - d. the Book of Ruth in the OT is the story of just such a kinsman-redeemer named *Boaz* who reclaimed Ruth's lost heritage.
- 8. So what we see in God's right hand is a title deed; but a title deed to what?

B. Vs. 2-4

²Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

³And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

⁴So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

1. I like v.2 for what it reveals about angels; apparently they’re not all the same.
 - a. John says he saw a “*strong angel*.”
 - b. for a long time I’ve been under the impression that angels were all pretty much the same – kind of like a heavenly *clone army*.
 - 1) I’ve pictured them as really tall, with broad shoulders, big thick neck and well-muscled arms and legs.
 - 2) perfect complexion and long flowing hair, with massive wings stretching out behind them.
 - c. but what John says here leads us in a different direction.
 - d. this angel was *strong*; the word means *mighty, powerful*; today we might say “Ripped”
 - e. the point is this angel was *different* in appearance from other angels; he stood out and the first thing John could think of to describe his difference was that he was big and powerful looking.
2. Not only is this angel strong, he’s got a *loud* voice.
 - a. the word loud is “mega”
 - b. BIG! It the kind of voice that fills the room.
3. This last week I attended the annual CC Pastors Conference down South.
 - a. some 700 senior pastors gathered from all over the United States and the world - it was a blessed time!
 - b. one of the pastors was from Maine – his name is Ken Graves and you may remember reading about him in a recent Calvary Chapel magazine.
 - c. they have a *extreme wrestling* outreach at their church and Ken competes along with the best of them.
 - d. he’s a big guy, a body-builder, and I happened to be working out in the weight room there at the conference center one afternoon when he came in.
 - e. oh my! I felt like a flea! Talk about ripped.
 - f. but not only is Ken a big, powerful man, he has a voice to make James Earl Jones and David Hocking envious.
 - g. it’s a deep, resonant, manly thing that commands attention.
 - h. he led worship Thursday morning and had us singing praise choruses that sounded very much like Marine Corp marching tunes.
 - i. and he hardly needed the microphone!
4. John sees this strong angel and then hears him issue forth a loud proclamation – and it goes out to every corner of creation -

“Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”

- a. in light of what the scroll is, a title deed, the question is –
 - b. who has the *credentials* to meet the terms on it’s outside and take possession of what it describes on the inside?
5. But as John watches, not a soul steps forward.
 - a. none of the angels are worthy
 - b. the cherubim aren’t worthy – not even one of the 24 elders is worthy.
 - c. no one *living* on earth is worthy, and no one who’s *dead and buried* is worthy.
 - d. in other words, there’s nothing and no one in all creation worthy enough to take the scroll.
 6. When John sees this, realizing what this scroll is the title deed to, he breaks down and begins to sob convulsively -- he’s overcome with grief.

- a. there's no consolation for him, because he knows what's at stake.
- b. he knows what this title deed is to –
- 7. This, friends, is the title deed to *Earth*.
 - a. God had given dominion of Earth to Adam in the Garden.
 - b. but Adam forfeited his dominion in the Fall and turned that dominion over to the devil.
 - c. this is why the Bible calls Satan the “god of this world” and the “prince of the power of the air.”^[8]
 - d. and why when Satan offered Jesus the mastery of all the kingdoms of the world if He would just bow down and worship him,
 - 1) Jesus didn't debate and argue with him over his rule of the kingdoms of this world.
 - 2) the force of the temptation was in that the offer was *real*;
 - 3) and reclaiming man's lost dominion is precisely *why* Christ came!
 - 4) the devil was offering Jesus a shortcut to His goal;
 - 5) why go the way of the Cross when all He needed to do was bow down & worship the devil?
- 8. You see, this is precisely what was at stake and John knew it.
 - a. dominion of Earth had been given to man, had been lost by man, and could only be reclaimed by a man.
 - b. but all men born since Adam are disqualified from entering the contest to reclaim man's lost dominion.
 - c. as sinners, tainted with Adam's rebellion and sin, they are slaves, and slaves have no legal rights, no standing in court.
- 9. John sees that the time for the issue of the dominion of Earth to be settled once for all has come.
- 10. An angel comes forth to declare this most important moment in all history.
- 11. And then, no one steps forward. He's crushed – He's amazed – He's overwhelmed by the thought that mankind's heritage and promise is about to be lost forever.

C. Vs. 5-7

⁵But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

- 1. In the midst of John's despair, one of the elders told him to cease his sobbing.
- 2. For one *has been* found who **IS** worthy to take the scroll.
- 3. The elder calls Him the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David.
- 4. These are OT titles for the Messiah; Christ.
- 5. In Genesis 49, as Jacob was lying on his deathbed, his sons gathered round for his final blessing.
 - a. the blessing turned into an incredible prophecy that's finding fulfillment even to this day.
 - b. about his 4th son, Judah, Jacob said –
- 8 **“Judah, you *are* he whom your brothers shall praise; Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies; Your father's children shall bow down before you.**
 - c. this was a prophecy of how the kings of Israel would come from the tribe of Judah.
- 9 **Judah *is* a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He bows down, he lies down as a lion; And as a lion, who shall rouse him?**
- 10 **The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.**
 - d. from these words, the Jewish people have always understood that the Messiah would be of the tribe of Judah – as indeed Jesus was.
 - e. it was from this as well that the Tribe of Judah took the symbol of the *lion* as their emblem.

- f. the lion is the king of beasts and in the ancient world stood as a symbol for kings; for majesty, power, sovereignty, and rule.
6. The Root of David comes from the prophecy of Isaiah 1 -
- 1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.**
- 10 “And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious.”**
- a. Jesse was King David’s father.
 - b. the picture in these verses from Isaiah is of a tree that has been cut off, leaving only a stump.
 - c. but after a time, that stump will once more sprout forth
 - d. David’s descendants continued to rule without interruption all the way through the destruction of the nation by the Babylonians, but then were seemingly cut off,
 - e. one day, the throne of David will be restored and his last descendant will come to reclaim it.
7. So, these two titles, the *lion of the tribe of Judah* and the *Root of David*, were well known at that time as referring to the Messiah.
8. And the elder tells John *he’s prevailed* – He’s conquered, He’s entered the contest and been found worthy to take the scroll and reclaim man’s lost dominion.
9. Jesus was qualified to enter the contest because He was the only human being ever born since Adam upon whom the devil had no claim.
10. The virgin birth assured that He did not bear the stain of sin.
11. And His sinless and perfect life meant that He never forfeited His rights as Adam had.
12. Make no mistake, Satan knew what was at stake – and this is why he appeared to Jesus in the wilderness and used those 3 particular temptations on Jesus.
- a. “If you are the Son of God – turn these stone into bread.”
 - 1) in other words, come on – You’re God; use Your power to satisfy Your needs.
 - 2) note carefully, Jesus’ reply – “**MAN** shall not live by bread alone.”
 - 3) Jesus knew He had to live and operate *as a man*; as a Spirit-filled and empowered man if he was to reclaim what was lost.
 - b. “Bow down and worship me and I will give you all these kingdoms”
 - 1) “after all, isn’t that why You came?”
 - 2) but Jesus would take no shortcuts – His path lay through the cross
 - 3) you see, Jesus didn’t just want the power and the planet, what was of far greater importance to Him was *people*.
 - 4) so Jesus told the story of the man who found a treasure in a field and went and sold all he had to buy that field, just so he could get the treasure.
 - 5) more important to God than man’s lost dominion is lost man!
 - c. finally Satan tempted “throw yourself off from the pinnacle of the temple – then the angels will sweep down and bear you up – and all the people will know you’re the Messiah”
 - 1) the appeal in this temptation for Jesus was to use His power to *force* people to believe in Him.
 - 2) Jesus, as a man, had to live consistent with the *character* of God – and God doesn’t use *force!*
 - 3) He loves us, showers us with mercy and grace, and gives plenty of evidence for His existence and love, but He never violates the power of choice He’s given us.
 - 4) force is simply not a part of His agenda – at present!
 - 5) for force makes void the very thing that makes us human – CHOICE.
 - 6) if Jesus had jumped from the pinnacle of the temple, and landed safely on the pavement below – the people would have been *forced* to believe He was the Messiah – and that is not God’s way.
 - 7) think about it – the miracles Jesus performed were *quiet*, tended to be in private, and never

drew attention to Himself for glory's sake; they were acts of compassion in meeting practical needs.

- 8) even the miracle of walking on the water and the Transfiguration were just for the disciples and for the express purpose of establishing them in their faith.
13. The point is, all 3 temptation aimed at removing Jesus from the contest – of making Him *unworthy* to take the scroll.
14. But the temptations failed – and the elder tells John the time has come for the scroll to be claimed by our *heavenly Kinsman-Redeemer*.
15. The lion of the tribe of Judah is ready,
16. So John turns back to the throne to witness that event – but what he *sees* is not what's been set up for him by the elder . . .

⁶And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

⁷Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

17. John expects a lion, but sees a lamb.
 - a. and it's not just any lamb,
 - b. it's a lamb that bears the marks of having been sacrificed.
18. In that day, sheep were used for two things – wool and sacrifices.
19. Nearly everyone had seen many lambs sacrificed so there was no sense of shock or surprise in going to the market or the local temple.
20. But what John saw in heaven was totally unexpected.
 - a. he thought he was going to see the Lion King - but what he sees is a lamb
 - 1) and the word he uses here is not the usual word for sheep,
 - 2) it's the word which speaks of a little lamb taken in by the children as a household pet!
 - 3) this isn't a piece of livestock – this isn't just one of the flock
 - 4) this is the *precious* lamb, the one that sleeps with you and eats at your table and plays with your kids.
 - b. the idea of seeing this lamb bearing the marks of the sacrificial knife are too much!
21. For the Passover, God told the people of Israel that they were to select a young lamb and bring it into their home and let it live with them for a while before they offered it as the Passover lamb.
22. He wanted them to understand this as a picture of the Real Passover Lamb, the Messiah; Who as God's Son would offer Himself for the sins of the world and make possible their release from bondage to sin and death.
23. As John now stands in heaven and sees the Lamb, he flashes back to the very first day he had met Jesus.
 - a. he was with John the Baptist at the Jordan river, baptizing people in preparation for the coming Messiah.
 - b. and suddenly the Baptist looked up, pointed at Jesus and said, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."
 - c. immediately, John started following Jesus.
24. Then, a little over three years later – he, *alone* of the disciples, stood at the foot of the cross and watched as the blood flowed from the wounds in Christ; he listened while Jesus said, "Father forgive them. They know not what they do." & "It is finished!"
25. Jesus is worthy to take the scroll and to loose its seals because as the faithful precious Lamb, He paid the price for our sins.
 - a. He satisfied the handwriting of ordinances that was against us. ^[9]
 - b. He's met the terms on the *outside* of the scroll.
 - c. the scroll belongs to Him –

- d. He is the *Second Adam* who instead of failing, did it right and now *has* the right, the power, and the authority, to redeem man and reclaim man's lost dominion.
26. We'll take a look at the meaning of the horns and eyes in our study on Wednesday.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Lion & The Lamb*

1. But as we end, I want to ask you to note the seeming paradox here.
2. The elder calls Jesus the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, but John sees a lamb.
3. And not just a lamb, but a *slain* lamb.
4. A lion speaks of kingly majesty, power, & authority -
5. A lamb is on the other end of the spectrum; it's lowly & humble
 - a. the lion is predator, the lamb - prey
 - b. the lion is the top of the food chain, the lamb is the bottom
 - c. the lion is fierce and fearless, the lamb is meek
 - d. the lion rules, the lamb follows
 - e. the lion roars, the lamb baas
6. Jesus is both the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world.
7. There is in the Lion the character of the Lamb, and there is in the Lamb, the nature of a Lion.
 - a. He is the Lamb who roars and the Lion who is meek.
 - b. the first time Jesus came – He came as a lamb to reclaim man's lost dominion by going to the cross.
 - c. but now that that dominion has been reclaimed, the day will soon come when He will return to take possession of that which rightly belongs to Him.
 - d. He will come again, not as Lamb, but as Lion, as King who's worthy to sit in David's throne and to rule over all the earth.

B. *He was Slain*

1. There is one final thing we need to note as we finish.
2. Heaven is the place of our ultimate healing.
 - a. in heaven, every eye will be dried; they'll be no more crying.
 - b. every sorrow will be emptied; every distress, calmed.
 - c. there'll be no sickness, no disease, and no wounds
3. On all that is, save one – For when John saw the Lamb, he saw Him with the marks of the crucifixion.
4. For all eternity, Jesus will bear the marks of the cross, as the eternal reminder of the *cost* of our salvation – of what it cost God to secure our presence before the throne of God.

[1] "Manhattan (New York)," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000*. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

[2] "Seward, William Henry," *Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2000*. © 1993-1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

[3] Heitzig, Skip *Revelation* pg. 57-58

[4] Courson, Jon *Tree of Life Bible Commentary: Revelation, Vol. 1* pg. 109-111

[5] Lev. 25:23-46

[6] ibid.

[7] Book of Ruth, Jer. 32:6-15

[8] 2 Cor. 4:4 Eph. 2:2

[9] Colossians 2:14