

4-14-24

Sermon- Let All God's Children Say Amen!

Scripture- Revelation 5:1-14 CTW- Ps 30:1-5

Hymns- 126, 12, 51

Theme- Anyone who comes to God in repentance and faith is accepted by Him and will become part of His kingdom. This is the underlying message of the Book of Revelation. God called John to write this book for it to be a wall of encouragement & strength to the church in difficult times. And it can be an encouragement & strength for us today if we'll read it, & just see what God has to say.

I. Is Revelation on Your Summer Reading List?

A. Revelation is one of the most neglected books in all the Bible. It has a message for Christians today, & yet many never even open it.

The reason, I imagine, is because they have concluded that the Book of Revelation is not for them. They shrug their shoulders & say, "Well, I'm just an average Christian & I'm not sure just what the book means." So they leave it to the scholars to interpret the symbols & figures & then tell them what it all means.

Yet, God caused John to write this book for it to be a wall of encouragement & strength to the church in difficult times. And it can be an encouragement & strength for us today if we'll read it, & just see what God has to say.

B. A case in point is Chapter Five. I don't know how anybody could read it without feeling a tinge of awe. There is something thrilling & exalting about this glimpse of heaven.

Here is the throne of God, with Almighty God Himself seated upon

it. Around it is the elders & the living creatures & the angels. In God's right hand there is a scroll, a book, sealed with seven seals. And the eyes of all who are there are fixed upon God, & the scroll that is in His hand.

As John looks upon this scene an angel speaks with a loud voice & asks, "Who is worthy to break the seals & open the scroll?" But no one, in heaven or on earth or under the earth, was able to open the scroll.

Behind those seals were the mysteries of the future, & the answers to the questions of life itself, & yet there was no one able to open the book. So, John said, "I wept & wept."

But one of the elders spoke to John & said, "Do not weep! See, there is one who 'is able to open the scroll & its 7 seals'" (Vs. 5). Then John saw One, "as a Lamb that had been slain," stepping forth to open the scroll & break its seals.

At this, there is great rejoicing in heaven. They all gather around the throne & sing a new song saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll & to open its seals, because you were slain, & with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe & language & people & nation" (Vs. 9).

C. We do not have to be theologians to understand all this. Jesus is the Lamb that was slain, & everything depends upon Him. He is the only one able to break the seals & reveal the secrets there. He is able, & He is worthy of all our worship. When we realize this, then we will understand a great deal of what the Book of Revelation has to say to us. Remember the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives...He will guide us into all things true! **John 16:13**. He is the Spirit of truth!

I believe that the mysteries hidden behind those seals were basically prophecies of the things which were going to come to pass in the history of the church & in its battles against Satan & all his forces.

But at the same time, I think we ought to realize that there are some things that would be sealed up beyond our understanding if it were not for Jesus, the Lamb who went to the cross & died for our sins. If it were not for Jesus, there are at least four areas which would make no sense to us at all.

II. So, What About this Sealed Bible?

First of all, the Bible would be impossible for us to understand if it were not seen in the light of what happened on Calvary.

A. Look at the Old Testament for example. If we began to read in Genesis & read every word in every book all the way through Malachi, without any knowledge of Jesus, I suggest that the Old Testament would mean very little to us.

In fact, I would go a step further & say that if it were not for Jesus, the OT would be virtually a forgotten book. It might be consulted by a few for its literary value, but for the most part it would be unread & totally ignored because it only has real meaning in light of what happened on the cross.

You can read it & say, "My, there are inspiring stories there." You can say, "There are great prophecies there." You can say, "There are great examples of faith there." For us, Jesus gives the OT meaning for today. The Story comes together in Him!

B. Lamb that was slain broke the seal of the Bible. Now we can begin to understand some of its great truths!

Here are prophecies fulfilled in the life & death & resurrection of Jesus. Now the emblems & the sacrifices & the animals offered on the altar have meaning. Now we begin to understand the meanings of the Ark of the Covenant & the Holy of Holies & the Tabernacle & the Temple.

Now the virgin birth in Bethlehem has meaning & purpose. Now the miracles & the healings & the resurrection from the dead and all the other great acts of Jesus have meaning & purpose.

Now the upper room & the broken bread & the sharing of the fruit of the vine all have meaning & purpose. Now the agony of Gethsemane & the trial that lasted all night long have meaning & purpose.

Now the weary body of Jesus that collapsed beneath the cross & the nails that penetrated His flesh all have meaning & purpose. They all come into focus when you see them in light of the Lamb that was slain, but who was victorious over death for all eternity.

So Jesus, that Lamb of God with nail pierced hands, breaks the seal & the **NT becomes the Word of Life itself!**

III. So, what all was in that sealed Bible?

A. The Paradox of nature is in there. In some ways, Nature is a mystery to us. It is a paradox. There is one side to nature that is good & positive, & another side that is terrible.

There is a beautiful part of nature. We love the balmy breezes, the green grass, & the trees in bloom. We love blue skies & beautiful clouds & warm days. We even like gentle rain & softly falling snow.

But on the other hand there is something terrible about nature.

The winds blow & floods come, they take life & claim property, & we think, "How can a God of love sanction something like this?"

Yet, there is meaning & purpose & direction behind everything in the world of nature. We look at nature & realize that things must die before they can live again. And it is because of His death that we have the promise of life. Now we can look beyond the violent storms & see the glory of the resurrection. That gives us hope with which we can comfort one another.

B. The History of God and His people is in there!

Even history itself is beyond man's understanding. I think that this is what caused John to weep. As John looked at the scroll, he must of thought about what was happening to Christians all around him.

Remember, he had been exiled to the Island of Patmos. He knew that the church on the mainland was under great persecution. John must have seen hundreds of Christians marched into the arena & then torn apart & devoured by lions & other wild beasts.

John must have seen loved ones & friends coated with pitch & made into human torches. He must have seen children pulled from their mothers' arms, & husbands & wives separated. He must have experienced their tears & their brokenness & their pain.

John must have wondered, "Why are things happening the way they are?"

We face the same problem. We pick up our newspapers & read of people dying on the streets, & we wonder, "Why does it happen? Why are people hungry & poor? Why are people greedy & vindictive? Why does such evil exist?"

It is not until we see the terribleness of sin, & Satan's hatred & envy, that we begin to understand. Cruelty, suffering, & pain are here because of sin, but upon the cross Jesus paid the price to free us from our sins.

Beyond it all, there is the glorious resurrection of Christ that says to us there is more than what is here on the face of this earth, & we have a hope beyond that which the world has to offer.

So the Lamb that was slain comes & breaks the seal of history.

C. The Secret of your life and mine is in there.

Finally, there is the mystery of your life & mine. I want to get personal for a moment because I was told in Seminary, "Remember when you stand up to preach, that there is at least one broken heart in every pew."

I think that there are probably more than that. We cover it up very skillfully. We put smiles on our faces & wear our Sunday best & try to pretend that everything is all right.

But just sit down & talk with someone, & before too long problems & concerns & pain begin to come out. It doesn't make any difference who we are or how successful we may seem to be, we all have our problems & our pain.

Maybe it is a problem at home between husband & wife. You feel like you can't talk to anybody about that because you're not supposed to have problems at home. Maybe it is a worry about your children and grandchildren...They're not growing up the way you had hoped they would. They are not following in the direction you had hoped they would follow.

Maybe there are financial problems & you can't see your way through them. And these burdens become heavier & heavier each passing day.

Maybe you are experiencing spiritual difficulties. You don't read the Bible, & your prayer life is almost nonexistent. Somehow, you just don't feel close to God anymore.

We have these problems, & we ask ourselves, "Why do we have these problems? Why do we have all these worries? Why can't we just have a beautiful life without any troubles to come our way?"

IV. The Answer: with the Bible, Jesus helps us to understand. The Lamb that was slain can show us the meaning & purpose & direction of life. He shows us the light at the end of the tunnel. He gives us hope that this world cannot offer, & a resurrection to life & life eternal.

Right now we do not see things as God sees them. We can only see through the glass darkly. But one day we will see it all as God sees, & we will understand as God understands.

There is something else I think that needs to be said. There is another scroll. The Book of Revelation calls it the Book of Life. On the Day of Judgment the seal of that book will be broken, & **when it is opened the only thing that will matter is whether or not your name is written there.**

It won't matter how much money you made while you were here on earth, what kind of car you drove, or how successful your marriage, or your occupation, or anything else. The only thing that will really matter is whether or not your name is written there, and that depends on your relationship with your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. So, check your summer reading list...Amen?