

## **The Redeemer is Praised in Heaven!**

Around 750 B.C. a man named Homer started telling two great stories that have continued to capture the world's imagination for 27 centuries. Both were set during the time of the Trojan War in 1200 B.C. The *Iliad* takes place in the last year of the Greek siege of Troy. The war had taken place because of one king trying to make another king pay for stealing his beautiful wife Helen.

The *Odyssey* took place ten years later and is the subject of my thoughts this morning. A warrior named Odysseus of Ithaca had gone off to fight in the Trojan War. Ten years have passed, and he has not yet returned home. His beautiful wife Penelope is told by many people surrounding her, "Odysseus is not coming: surely he has died or doesn't want to come home." As the years have passed, Penelope has remained faithful to Odysseus as she has faced the difficult task of raising their son Telemachus without him.

In her heart Penelope still believes that Odysseus could come at any time. She even has dreams about his return, but it has been so long! So much about her and Telemachus' present condition needs to be fixed. What she doesn't know is that Odysseus is coming home, winning one victory after another on his way. Meanwhile the suitors are lining up to take advantage of Odysseus' absence, telling Penelope they can fix the mess she is in if she'll only turn to them. But these enemies of Odysseus just keep making Penelope's situation worse.

Two questions hang in the air as Odysseus makes his way toward Ithaca. First, will Penelope still be found faithful when her true leader Odysseus returns? And second, will Odysseus really be able to fix what has been made wrong in his absence?

Our situation in the world today is like Penelope's.

We are living in days when government officials are claiming that if we just give them more control over our lives, they can fix what is broken here on earth. But despite grandiose claims, often government intervention just makes our situation worse.

**We often find ourselves crying out, "Is there anyone out there who can really fix the mess we are in?"**

Today's passage will give us the resounding answer we need as we face the mess we are in! There is a Redeemer who can make what's wrong with the world right!

**In chapter four we saw Heaven praising God for being the Creator of all!  
In Chapter five we will see Heaven praising Jesus for being the Redeemer, the only One who can really fix the mess earth is in!**

Read Revelation 5      PRAY!

### **V. 1 The scroll that must be opened to initiate the redemption of earth**

John sees an important scroll in the hand of God, sealed with seven seals.

Throughout history kings have written important instructions down on scrolls to be opened and acted on only by those they sent the instructions to.

Those scrolls were almost always sealed with hot wax and then the King would take his unique ring and impress it on the seal of wax. That would identify it as coming from the King, and severe penalties came if anyone opened the scroll but the rightful recipient.

In Roman days official papers from Caesar had a series of seals on them. The most important papers had one seal for Caesar, a second seal for the Senate, a third seal for the general of an army, and a fourth seal for the governor of the province. But this scroll had seven seals! The number of perfection –this must be the most important message ever!

Now I love how Revelation lays itself open for us!

We don't need to do a lot of guessing about what this scroll is about. Revelation tells us. Chapter six features the opening of the first six seals, and chapter eight indicates everything that follows is part of the seventh seal.

*Use a telescope to explain telescopic view of seals/trumpets/bowls!*

**The scroll is about the events that will unfold beginning with the tribulation.  
The scroll gives the recipient the authority to initiate the redemption of earth.**

“The scroll seems to contain the story of humanity’s losing its lordship over creation and the regaining of that authority by the man Christ Jesus. The scroll might be titled the “Book of Redemption” since it contains the story of redemption to its final consummation, not only in relation to humanity but also in relation to the world.” Charles Ryrie, *Revelation*, page 48

Adrian Rogers called the scroll itself the title deed of the earth! He said it like this:

“To put it simply, Adam and Eve sold the farm. Satan walked away with the title deed to all creation.”  
-Adrian Rogers, *Unveiling the End Times in Our Time*, 77

Now we have some people in our church who own rental properties. And occasionally they'll have tenants who refuse to pay rent, trash the property, and use it for anything but the purposes it is supposed to be used for. After that goes on for a while and the tenants do not repent, the owner is forced to do something.

He puts the title deed in his pocket, goes to the Judge, confirms his rightful ownership and demonstrates the tenant's delinquency, and a date is set for the tenants to be "set out" of the property by force of law and the property is returned to the rightful owner. And then the property is renovated for others.

#### **V. 2-4      John doesn't see anyone able to open the scroll**

John hears a mighty angel ask, "Who is worthy to open the seals and act on the scroll?"

And John looks over at the 24 elders and he sees their heads drop.  
John looks at the animal like faces of the living creatures, and they drop.  
John looks down at earth and sees that the best of men still fall short of the glory of God, and his head drops, and he cries and cries!

Now for you to understand John's reaction here we need to go back to our illustration of the owner coming back to "set out" the bad tenant. The reality here is that the property owned is a duplex! And the godly family on one side of the duplex has been harassed and persecuted and criticized by the family on the other side of the duplex.

The godly family used to be just like the bad tenants, but they responded to the grace shown to them by the owner. And they have tried to change the mind of the bad tenants over the years, telling them how good the owner really is, but the bad tenants will have none of it. And as the years have passed the bad tenants have done unspeakable things to the godly tenants. And the godly tenants don't know how they'll go on if the owner doesn't come soon and make it right!

John weeps because if that scroll can't be opened and acted on, things on earth will never change. And as a man in his mid 90's who has had one too many Patmos experiences, John can't bear the thought of earth remaining as it is. And he longs for the day God's will is going to be done on earth instead of Satan's!

#### **V. 5-7      Jesus: The One who will open and act on the scroll!**

One of the elders points John's attention to Jesus!

All the way back in Genesis 49 Jacob had prophesied of this coming Lion!

**“Judah is a young lion...the scepter will not depart from Judah...until He whose right it is comes and the obedience of the peoples belongs to Him....He washes His clothes in wine, and His robes in the blood of grapes.” -Genesis 49:9-11**

When you think of Jesus, you are to think of a powerful lion!

He is not only the descendant of David; He was around before David, the root of David. He was the source of David before He was an earthly descendant of David!

The Elder tells John that the Lion has been victorious! The word there is Nikao, where we get, Nike from! Truly it's all about “Victory in Jesus!”

When we think of Jesus as the lion, our thoughts are drawn to His deity!

But then this Lion is also called the Lamb! And this Lamb metaphor dominates John's thought in the rest of the book: 6:1ff, 7:9ff, 12:11, 13:8, 21:9.

When we think of Jesus as the lamb, our thoughts are drawn to his humanity!

**The Lion who is the Lamb is another way of speaking of the One who is 100% God and 100% man, uniquely qualified to open the scroll!**

Now this description is different than an ordinary lamb:

Lambs don't stand, but this One does!

Slain is dead, but this Lamb is very much alive!

Seven horns speak of this Lamb's power!

Seven eyes speaks of this Lamb's knowledge!

Seven spirits speaks of the Holy Spirit!

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Omnipotence!

Omniscience!

Omnipresence!

In verse seven we see this Lion/Lamb takes the scroll and raises it!

I picture Jesus holding the scroll high like an Olympic torch runner, ready to bring it down into the fire pit, starting the events of the tribulation.

**V. 8-14 Christ's receipt of the scroll initiates three hymns of praise!!!**

Now we're going to see here that praise is contagious!

In verse eight we are told 28 sing!

In verse eleven we see millions of angels join in!

In verse 13 we hear that every creature joins in!

**What are they singing about?**

**They are praising Jesus for the redemption He provided with His blood!**

Now let's take a closer look at verse eight.

This time of praise starts with telling us two things the elders have:

First, they have harps to praise God with. Like the one you just heard played!

Second, they have bowls filled with the prayers of the saints! Like the ones here!

In Psalm 141:2 the Psalmist said, "Let my prayer come before you as an incense."

**It is my hope this morning that this passage becomes fuel for your prayer-life!**

Now perhaps you already pray about things going on in your life and for people you know, and for that I commend you.

But everything is placed in the Bible the way it is for a reason. And...

**There is a reason verse nine comes after verse eight here: the prayers of the saints have brought a harvest of souls into Heaven from every place on earth!**

The prayers in Heaven's bowls are not just about sick people getting better and people finding jobs, as important as those are; the prayers in Heaven's bowls are also about the gospel boldly going where it has never been before!

Do you remember what Jesus said when He saw lost people: "Pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send workers into the Harvest Field!"

**How many prayers do you have in Heaven's bowls for unreached people in the world?**

These prayers in verse eight are prayers of petition. Have you ever prayed to God and said, "it's not fair that we have all these Christian resources and the Nubri people of Nepal don't even have John 3:16 in their language, or the Jesus Film, or any known Christian among them! God, please send the gospel to the Nubri!"

**Oh, folks, don't be lazy pray-ers! Be prayer warriors!**

I get to go to Taiwan tomorrow to be with fellow Bryan Grad Mark Heffner! October is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my graduation from Bryan College!

I have been praying for Mark and his ministry in Taiwan for 20 years!  
His prayer letters reading like the Book of Acts!

Now I get to see the work firsthand! And participate in it!       GLORY!

I got to go to a World Cup semifinal game once-that was big, but this is bigger!  
What a joy to pray for the nations!

For 20 years I have been praying through Operation World.

If you'd like a copy, sign up down here- I'd like to give you one!

**Don't miss it folks: your praise of the Lamb in Heaven with believers from around the globe will be so much richer if you have prayed for them!**

**"Missions is not the main purpose of the church, worship is! Missions exists because worship does not!"  
-John Piper!**

I want nothing less from this trip to Taiwan than to add a few more worshippers in Heaven! I want the same thing when I am witnessing to family and friends here!

**There will be someone from every tribe there, including...**

Aragoso	Bashkarik	Chenoua	Dakpa	E	Fongoro
Gurlu	Hongjin Tai	Irish Deaf-20,000 of them	Jina		Komono
Lamam	Moghol	Nagekeo	Orang Khala	Pahlarani	Qizilbash
Rai	Senufo	Tuat Berber	Ubi	Vale	Wawoni
Xeta-8 left	Yergyush	Zuara			

The neat thing is that, as far as I know, not a one of those tribes has yet been reached or engaged...but they will be!

Like the Aucas were with Jim Elliott; Like the Barotse because of Mike & Amy Smith;  
like the Lebou have been because of Cash's and Flemings;  
like the Pumi have because of friends I cannot name here!

**There will be someone from every language there, including...**

Arabic	Bulgarian	Castilian	Dari	English	Farsi
Greek	Hindi	Italian	Japanese	Korean	Latvian
Mandarin	Nepali	Oroko	Persian	Quechua	Ramoaina (PNG)
Spanish	Tajik	Ukrainian	Vasavi	Wolof	Xiri
Yiddish	Zapotec				

**There will be someone from every people group there, including...**

African	Babylonian	Caribbean	Dravidian	European	Finno-Ugric
Gypsies	Han Chinese	Indo-Malay	Jewish	Kurds	Ladakhi
Middle Eastern		Native Americans		Orphans of the world	
Polynesian	Qiang	Roma	Slavic	Tuareg	Udmurt
Vietnamese	Wachi	Xhosa	Yi	Zombo	

**There will be someone from every nation there, including...**

Afghanistan	Bolivia	Columbia	Dominican Republic	Egypt	
France	Ghana	Haiti	India – with 4,635 distinct people groups!		
Jamaica	Kenya	Laos	Mexico	Nepal	Oman
Papau New Guinea		Philippines	Qatar	Romania	Senegal
Taiwan	Uganda	Venezuela	Wales	Yemen	Zimbabwe

The day came when Odysseus did finally come back to Ithaca! And yes, even after all of these years, Penelope had been faithful to him and eagerly anticipated his return. Despite the enemies of Odysseus trying to take what was rightfully his, Odysseus was the rightful owner of the property, and the rightful husband of Penelope. And so when he returned he dealt decisively with all who had tried to take the land that was rightfully his and steal his beloved Penelope. He fixed what had been made wrong!

Invitation to the Classics, pages 29-33

Folks, as the day approaches for Jesus to return, he has been winning one people group after another to Himself, inviting us to join Him in that great effort!

In the fullness of time, He will take up that scroll and the redemption of earth will unfold during the time of the Tribulation.

He will deal with those who have been messing with His bride!

Verse ten says one day saints will reign with Him on a renewed earth!

Verse fourteen tells us the saints in Heaven sing of His rightful dominion!

Capters four and five tell us Heaven resounds in Praise to God for being our Creator and Redeemer!

Won't you resolve to get in on the praise now!

Won't you pray regularly and specifically for missionary advance!

And make the most of the opportunities God gives you!

Now, if you are here this morning and are not a Christian, let me encourage you to receive Christ this morning!

Gospel Explanation/ Sinner's Prayer!