

'The Lion and the Lamb'

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By Bob Mendelsohn

[Biblical text at the end of sermon.

Previous sermons in this series available on the website

See: www.jewsforjesus.org.au/sermons.html]

Introduction

The scene in heaven so far has been one of calm. Today in Revelation chapter five, we see a moment of frustration. It reminds me of the executive board room, when the numbers are not quite up to scratch. The Board is meeting to figure out their next move. What are we to do? Who can fix it for us?

The children on television in the UK watch Bob the Builder and he has invaded Australia and no doubt dozens of other English speaking countries with his singsong question to the problems of the day, "Can he fix it?" A quick read of the morning paper will unveil situation after situation of difficulty and problems that need addressing. Judges who drink and cover up accidents, stabbings in schools, rail strikes and commensurate confusion...all bring us to the same question, "Who can fix it?"

So the picture we see in this chapter is one of the fixer who is an unusual fixer. Consider this. Jungles and near pastures. Quite a contrast of locations. And kings and servants; independents and dependents. Top dog and milk toast. We see lions and lambs and slain lambs at that. If we were to list fixers in the list, which animal would be the fixer? The lion or the lamb? Of course, the lion, the controller, the dominator. So no wonder there is surprise in John as he records for us this answer.. It's the lamb that deals with the situation. And he solves it perfectly. How he does that is our topic today,

The scroll

The solver is the one who can read the scroll. He is the one worthy of opening it and I think by implication, able to read it. Listen to verse 2, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" The book according to verse one is written on both sides. Do you know any other Jewish book written in a scroll, that according to that book itself was written on both sides? Sure, it's the Torah.

Ex. 32.15 ¶ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one side and the other.

This scroll is sealed and only the one who wrote it is worthy to interpret it. The issue at hand is not opening a scroll, like opening a jar of pickles. Who can do this, physically, that is? But rather the issue is who is worthy to open its understanding to the rest of us? Who knows the future? Who knows the words of God, and can tell us what they mean? No wonder the honest in heaven are frustrated. They cannot say they know things. They don't jump up and volunteer all the great information they know. They say, "I'm not worthy" and look for another.

Even John says nothing, but weeps. He knows the promises of God are true, but who can deal with the problems of Laodicea and Sardis? Who can answer the overcoming problems of the Thyatirans?

The Lion

Then the elder puts his hand on John's shoulder and tells him not to weep. And what does he communicate? Behold! Hey, stop what you are doing and watch this. And the elder points out a lion. Yippee, John would think. A lion. Excellent. And according to the elder, it's the lion of Judah. Excellent again. That's a promise fulfilled, from Genesis 49.9. Jacob's prophecy about Judah is fulfilled, and that brings gladness. Even as you make a Chanukah list and let it be known what you want on that day or those days, and then it comes to pass. Wonderful, you think. A promise is fulfilled.

Look at the other titles in verse 5. Root of David. Sounds like Isaiah 11. Let's read a bit from there.

Is. 11.1 ¶ Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

This is a direct fulfilment of this passage. But when a portion of Bible is quoted, often the entire passage is in view. Let's keep reading in Isaiah 11.

Is. 11.2 And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

These are the 7 spirits we see referenced in chapter one and again here in Revelation 5.6. God's Spirit is involved in the Root of David. Son and Spirit are joined, and never separate.

And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. (11.3-4)

This again sounds like what John would have been referencing in Revelation 5. When the Root of David appears, it's for judgment and for conquest. It's not to be a pawn or a domesticated animal—he's the lion of them all. Continue reading here in chapter 11 of Isaiah.

Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the kid, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze; Their young will lie down together; And the lion will eat straw like the ox. (11.5-7)

The entire animal kingdom seems to be at peace with each other. Wolves and lambs, calves and lions and cows and bears. It's magical, but far outside human understanding. These natural predators don't normally dwell with their future prey. But a sense of calm is over the scene. Many have painted this Peacable Kingdom. It's a great picture.

They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. Then it will come about in that day That the nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious. (11.9-10)

So the confidence Isaiah has about the future of Israel even includes the Gentiles. The nations will come to the Root of Jesse, the Root of David. He will extend his resting place, His Shabbat to the peoples of the earth, it's glorious to behold.

Back to John. Verse 5 begins with the verb (In the Greek) "overcome." It's in the Greek tense that indicates completed action. It's stated first in the sentence to emphasize the victory and it's without object meaning it's complete and thorough. He didn't win a war; he just simply 'has won.' Wow, finally, John thinks. The

problems of Rome are going to be dealt with in fact, have already been dealt with here in heaven. The victory is ours.

All that is going on in the thinking of John as he hears the elder tell him to look, the Lion, the Root of David.

The Lamb

So imagine the surprise in John back in Revelation 5 in verse 6 when he sees no lion, but only a lamb. And at that, a lamb as if he were slain. He looked pretty beaten up. He would have been bloody. He wasn't formidable. He was small; he was weak. He was insignificant. Look, a lamb, not even a fully-grown sheep. A baby. An underling. Shock of shocks... imagines this is the conqueror?

He is in verse 6 one who has 7 horns, a symbol of complete authority and 7 eyes, a symbol of complete capacity to view, or with complete understanding. And he has the 7 spirits about which Isaiah wrote and thus the lamb is the keeper of the Spirit of God. This surprise creature is alive yet was killed. This creature, the lamb is both weak and full of strength, and takes the scroll from the Father on the throne and opens it. He alone is worthy. He alone is able. And immediately all the creatures in heaven bow and adore him.

Daniel's vision

Let's turn to Daniel chapter 7 for a moment. The language is too similar not to bring this to mind. And I believe it's what John wants us to learn today.

I kept looking Until thrones were set up, And the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow, And the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing And coming out from before Him; Thousands upon thousands were attending Him, And myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; The court sat, And the books were opened. Then I kept looking because of the sound of the boastful words which the horn was speaking; I kept looking until the beast was slain, and its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but an extension of life was granted to them for an appointed period of time. I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations, and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed. (7.9-14)

The one who comes to the ancient of days is the Saviour, the Lord Y'shua. And to him is given kingdoms and peoples and

nations. This Son of Man wins the victory that other beasts had ruined. No wonder John says in verse 13, To him who sits on the throne and unto the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and power and dominion forever and ever. It's not a new teaching; it's just new to us, to know who is the son of Man. It's Y'shua. It's the Lamb, and not the Lion alone. Surprise of surprises.

Lordship of Y'shua

We are speaking today about the Lord Y'shua who is at once both lamb and lion. At once both the dominated and the dominator. He is the powerful and the weak. He is the top and bottom of the food chain. He is wild and domestic. He is the alpha and omega of the animal kingdom. As Lord he can demand of us.

Consider:

Someone once wrote and asked Emily Post, the etiquette expert of another generation, "What is the correct procedure when one is invited to the White House but has a previous engagement?"

Replied Post, "An invitation to dine at the White House is a command, and it automatically cancels any other engagement."

[Today In The Word, November, 1989, p.7.]

Shortly after joining the Navy, the new recruit asked his officer for a pass so he could attend a wedding. The officer gave him the pass, but informed the young man he would have to be back by 7 p.m. Sunday. "You don't understand, sir," said the recruit. "I'm in the wedding."

"No, you don't understand," the officer shot back. "You're in the Navy!"

Listen, friends, the 24 elders bow to worship. The four living creatures bow to worship. God has done something awesome in sending his son Y'shua to die for us. Remember it was the same John who said at the seeing of Jesus walking towards him so many decades earlier, "Behold the Lamb of God" who takes away the sin of the world. When the lamb does his work, he triumphs completely. It's not a one-off single small skirmish he wins; it's the eternal troubles of the world. He looks at the world of woe and he doesn't look for Bob the Builder. He doesn't look for anyone else to save the planet. He alone can fix it. Y'shua is the Saviour. And he deserves praise and thanks for he has done it.

Priests and kings

One last comment about our role in this. No, we are not worthy. We are not going to open scrolls and unlock seals. But we are called in verse 10 to be a kingdom and priests to reign on the earth. Wow. We are called to join in with Y'shua in his kingdom. We are called to participate along with him in this mysterious and glorious realm of super nature. But again,

as you would expect this is a reflection of a previous instruction from Torah. Exodus 19.5-6 records the message from God through Moses to the Jewish people at Sinai. We are called to share God's message to the ends of the earth (For all the earth is mine. V 5) and we are called to be priests and serve the nations of the earth as such. Israel by and large failed in this, and here we see the redeemed community of the Lord called again to discharge this priestly function. Lambs work with priests as servants, now the Lamb is the One to be served.

We are called to teach and reach the thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads (Rev. 5.11). And did you hear from where people come to the lamb (Rev. 5.9)? From every tribe and tongue and people and nation. The number four, and the use of the nouns in fours remind us of the universal, that is of the four corners of creation. No one is left out. This use of the four-fold includes everyone. (cf 7.9, 10.11, 11.9, 13.7, 14.6, 17.15, 4.6, Acts 10, especially!)

Let's be priests and serve God and the nations. Let's tell everyone about the Lamb who was slain that they might be joining us in this hymn of eternal praise to the Lord who is over all and before whom we all should bow down and worship.

Summary

So: What should you learn/hear today as a result of reading this text? Or what lessons do we learn from today's teaching?

- 1) Be blessed by reading this book regularly
- 2) True life is found in the death of Y'shua who purchased us back from Satan and gave us as a present to the Almighty
- 3) Surprises are good in the plan of God to show us who will truly lead us
- 4) Look for ways to serve the nations around you, and to share God's love and the plan of salvation with others.
- 5) Worship is related to our understanding of who is worthy

Invitation

We want to give a choice to you. Maybe you have been an opponent of the Messiah. Maybe you have worshipped wrong. Maybe you have rejected what God said, but today you want to turn and agree with God about Y'shua. If you would like to be delivered from your sin by the blood of Y'shua, then pray this prayer and receive His love and grace. Father, forgive me in the name of Y'shua for all my sins. He was the Saviour and the fulfilment of all prophecies about Messiah. He is the one and the only one who can save me from my selfishness, from my sin. I acknowledge Y'shua as that one who wants to free me, and who alone can free me. I repent of my sin and accept Y'shua as my deliverer. By faith I am now born again by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, please talk to me after the service is over, [\[or email me if you are reading this online\]](#) so we can talk about growing in this knowledge and this relationship with God.

Actual text

Rev. 5.1 ¶ And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.

Rev. 5.2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”

Rev. 5.3 And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it.

Rev. 5.4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it;

Rev. 5.5 and one of the elders said to me, “Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”

Rev. 5.6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

Rev. 5.7 And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Rev. 5.8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

Rev. 5.9 And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Rev. 5.10 “And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

Rev. 5.11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

Rev. 5.12 saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.”

Rev. 5.13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard

saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honour and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

Rev. 5.14 And the four living creatures kept saying, “Amen.” And the elders fell down and worshiped.

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