

THE AWARDS CEREMONY AT THE THRONE OF GOD

The wonderful and mysterious account of John's vision in Revelation 5:1-13.

What was it that made John the beloved weep? What was in that seven-sealed book that no man could open? Who is the root of David? Who was it that sat on the throne? Who is it that will reign on earth?

Let's start in verse one:

“And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 ”And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?’

3 “And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 “And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 “And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 “And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 “Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

13 “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

And so, we are given a glimpse of the beginning of the end of the redemption process of God’s Chosen ones. The future is not written out in advance, Christ could have failed. He didn’t! He *prevailed* to the end and accomplished His purpose.

The Importance of Prevailing

Revelation 5:5 explains that it was because Christ prevailed that He qualified to receive power and riches, wisdom, strength and honor, glory and blessings (Rev. 5:12). One wonders, what if He had not prevailed? We, also, are called to prevail in the most important struggle of our very lives, far more important than we could possibly imagine. The Father has called certain ones of His choosing to prevail and be among the First Fruits, those of the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6).

In Matthew 10:22 Jesus warns that if we hold to His word we will be hated of all men for His sake, but he that endures to the end shall be saved. Is Jesus implying that if one does not endure to the end he will not be saved? In Matthew 24:13 Jesus again tells us that he that endures to the end shall be saved. What is Jesus telling us?

Perhaps some of our very knowledgeable and popular Doctors of Theology should explain to Jesus the Doctrine of once saved always saved; apparently He hasn't heard.

In II Thessalonians 1:4-5 we are told to endure our persecutions and tribulations that we may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God. Is Paul saying that to be worthy depends on your endurance? Apparently Paul hasn't heard about once saved always saved either, but then how could he know, he did not have the privilege of attending one of our modern enlightened seminaries.

He That Has An Ear

Let's seriously consider what John was told to write to the seven churches (Rev. cp. 2 and 3). There was one bit of advice, a warning that was common to each of them. "He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches." That advice was then followed by, "*he that overcomes...*," followed by a particular reward for those that did overcome: Ephesus, the tree of life, to Smyrna, a crown of life, to Pergamos, access to the hidden manna and a new name, to Thyatira, power over the nations and the morning star, to Sardis, white garments, and their names retained in the Book of Life and mentioned to the Father and His angels. Philadelphia will be made a pillar in the temple of God and to Laodicea, the right to sit with Christ in his throne. Also, none that overcomes shall be hurt by the second death (Rev. 2: 11). Do you have an ear? Are you an over-comer?

Causes Of Failure

The parable of the sower explains our predicament very well (Matt. 13:18-23). Jesus tells us that even though seed is planted and germinates it does not all endure to maturity. He gives four underlying causes of failure: 1. a lack of understanding, 2. tribulation or persecution because of the word, 3. the cares of this world 4. the deceitfulness of riches. But those that received the word on good ground understood and bore fruit. Let's clean up the good ground of our faith, and pray for understanding, endurance, and perseverance that we may receive His word.

Jesus cautions us in John 16:33 that in this world we will have tribulation and then reminds us that we should be encouraged because He has overcome the world. Through Him we can too.

Not An Easy Road

Paul instructs us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). He is telling us, in no uncertain terms, that our salvation is not something that we should leave up to any preacher, priest, rabbi or anyone else. There is more to it than repeating the “so called” sinners prayer, one must endure to the end. In Acts 14:22 we are told that it’s through much tribulation that we enter the Kingdom of God. But we glory in tribulation knowing that tribulation works patience; we are building character (Rom. 5:3, James 1:3, 12).

Consider those saints described in Hebrews 11:36-37. They were mocked, stoned, imprisoned, sawn in two, destitute, afflicted, tormented, and I’m sure that’s not the half of it. Take a look at most any issue of the Voice Of Martyrs magazine to see what’s going on in the world today and know that there is even more coming. Do we think ourselves better than they?

The Two Begettals of Jesus

Now let’s consider the coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In Romans 1:3-4 we are told He was born of the seed of David according to the Flesh. So, in every respect He was flesh and blood. But then, in Matthew 1:18

we are told that He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, the Seed of the Father, and so was in every respect the Son of God.

Jesus was begotten of two lineages. Flesh from the seed of David, Spirit from the seed of the Father. But unlike us, even at His death, His fleshly seed did not see corruption (Ps. 16:7, Acts 2:31). At His resurrection the spiritual Seed, which was given by the Father at conception, was resurrected to eternal life. (Yes, Jesus was in every sense really dead and had to be resurrected. Read Romans 1:4).

Obedience Must Be Learned

Now here is an interesting thing. We know that Jesus lived a sinless life, but look what we are told in Hebrews 5:8-9. “Though He were a son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Can you imagine that? He had to learn obedience! He does not ask us to do anything that He has not already done, so, we also must learn obedience to attain eternal life, for it is only given to those who obey Him.

And so, because He endured and learned obedience, Jesus was born again in the manner as He explained to Nicodemus in John 3:1-13.

The Two Begettals of Man

Now consider ourselves. We are first begotten of the flesh from the seed of man and after nine months of growth

and development are born of the flesh. Later, through the process of repentance, belief in Christ, baptism and the laying on of hands, we are begotten of the Seed of the Father. Essentially, however, it is repentance and belief; consider the thief on the cross, for God looks on the heart.

Although we are right then begotten and in every way the son or daughter of God, we are not yet born of God since we are still flesh and blood. According to the words of Jesus, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. We must be born of the spirit (John 3:1-13; I Cor. 15:35-54). We too, should grow, develop and learn many things, the chief of which is obedience. *(Do not be confused by the Greek word gennao, as it represents the entire conception to birth process, and is inconsistently translated as born or begotten in many translations).*

Learning Obedience God's Way

We are given our first lesson in obedience by our physical and spiritual observance of the Days of Unleavened Bread. The very next day after we symbolically partake of the broken body and blood of Jesus in obedience to the New Testament Passover, we are to cleanse our homes and our hearts of physical and spiritual leaven, leaven being a symbol for sin. Also, we are instructed to eat unleavened bread and to feast on the unleavened bread of God's word (Lev. 23:6-8, I Cor. 5:6-8).

The Days of Unleavened Bread is a seven-day teaching tool using performance, repetition, and practice, to be repeated each year at the appointed time. Seven, being the number of

completion and perfection, represents a complete lifetime of striving against sin, which is the task laid before us.

Upon rising from the baptismal waters we are free of all sin, but being physical we don't remain sinless. Searching out and cleansing our homes of all leavening symbolizes that cleansing. Not surprisingly, sometime during those seven days we often find some overlooked leavening, showing us that there is some overlooked unconfessed sin yet in our lives that we need to deal with. Also, just as sin is so apt to creep back into our lives unnoticed, leavening is often reintroduced into our lives by forgetfulness.

God is a very wise and patient teacher, He knew we would need constant reminding, so He ordained the Feast of Unleavened Bread for our benefit. It is designed to show us that the Christian life is a continuous struggle and we must be ever on the alert.

To The Very End

Throughout the Bible we are admonished and encouraged to endure, prevail and overcome to the very end so that we may be counted worthy to gain the kingdom of God. But be assured, we have all the help we need to succeed. For He has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." Also, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do to me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

Remember this promise: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but

will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (I Cor. 10:13).

An Encouraging Word and Warning From Jesus

Luke 12:4-9

4 “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 “But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7 “But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 “Also I say unto you, whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

9 “But he that denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

Obtaining Grace

We are often reminded that grace is a free gift; a pearl of great price; and it is worth giving up all you have to obtain it but, with grace comes a grave responsibility. Grace can't be earned, you can't get it on your own merits and no amount of obedience will earn it for you. There is only one way to receive grace and that is by true repentance (abandoning your old sinful ways) and proving your acceptance of Jesus

Christ by your sincere desire to obey Him. He will give you all the help you need including forgiveness seventy times seven (Matt. 18:22 or innumerable), and that's His promise to you. But if not sincere, why then would a just and wise God cast His pearls before swine?

Consider the words of Christ

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). “...If a man love me, he will keep my words” (John 14:23, Mark 7:7-8).

Our Own Rewards Ceremony

“And he saith unto me, ‘Write: Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb’- “And he saith unto me: ‘These are the true sayings of God’” (Rev. 19:9).

Again, we have been promised all the help we need, so we find ourselves without excuse. If we fail to make it to our own rewards ceremony, we have no one to blame but ourselves. It's God's desire that you not fail. If you fall, get up, if you fail, try again. God is building something great in you, endure, prevail, overcome - to the very end.

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Booklets on related subjects:

LIFE AFTER DEATH 1 & 2
BEINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD
UNDERSTANDING HELL
IS HEAVEN REALLY OUR HOME?

James 1:22-25

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

“For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

“For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

“But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

Wisdom

“Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil” (Prov. 3:7). *Watch that your wisdom doesn't supersede God's written word.*

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). *Much of what is taught and believed in today's popular religions seems so right but has no basis in truth.*

“The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkens unto counsel is wise” (Prov. 12:15). *You may be right in your eyes but is it right in God's eyes?*

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Prov. 18:13). *Better you should check it out before you dismiss it.*

“Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him” (Prov. 26:12). *Read the first one again.*

“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter” (Prov. 25:2).

Why not earn the honor of kings and search out the truth of a matter?