

Do Not Despair

A Sermon by Rev. Terry Schnarr

"Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and loose its seven seals" (Rev. 5:5).

The comfort and consolation of this passage summarizes the meaning of the whole of the fifth chapter of the book of Revelation. Don't worry. Be happy. Don't grieve, mourn, and feel sorry for yourself. The Lord God Jesus Christ rules over all things of our lives.

He rules over the angels and evil spirits who are our constant companions, making sure that we are in freedom to make good rational choices even after we have made many bad choices over and over again. Every day, every hour, is new, and we have the freedom to begin a new life.

When John saw the scroll sealed with seven seals and heard that there was no one worthy to open the book, he cried a lot; he wept much. Why? What was he grieving about? John was crying because he knew that if the book was not opened, the whole human race would perish. The whole human race would come under the power and control of satans and devils from hell. Each one of us would be compelled to love ourselves and the world, to be selfish and materialistic, and would spend eternity in hell. John cried out of grief and sadness for the whole human race.

We sometimes find ourselves in this state of grief. It is a depressed state of mind in which we feel, and think, that we just can't be saved. We feel and think that we can never change, that we will always continue to say and do the nasty and mean things we have habitually done. We feel and think that there is no one who can help, that there is no one with any power to change or do anything for us. We feel despair. We feel hopeless. This is what John felt and expressed, though his concern was for all people, not just himself.

The scroll sealed with seven seals is the Word of God, the Old and New Testaments. Before the Lord made His second coming and revealed the hidden meaning in the stories of the Bible, people did not know how or why the Bible was holy. It appeared to be a poor history book about the Children of Israel and the Jewish race, and a man named Jesus who

claimed to be the Son of God, performed miracles and taught a new way of relating to one another.

On the one hand the Word was written to guide us into a closer relationship with God and with each other. On the other hand, it is written in parables and incomprehensible visions, hiding God's love and wisdom from people who would abuse them for the sake of their own selfish desires. The Word, revealing all of God's infinite love and wisdom, is hidden from people to protect them from themselves. The Lord opens the hidden meanings in the Word to people slowly and gradually according as they grow in love and wisdom, by doing what it clearly teaches.

After we die, the Lord will begin to open the seven seals of the Word, allowing us to see and understand what is contained in it. How we respond and react to the opening of the Word will depend on how much we have loved the Word and tried to live by it in this world. If we have studied the Word, prayed for enlightenment, asked the Lord to help us shun our evils, and tried to do what the Word teaches out of love for the Lord, then as the internal meanings are revealed to us in the spiritual world we will gladly and readily drink it in. We will go into heaven where there are other people like ourselves who love the Lord and love to try to understand and live according to His Word.

On the other hand, if we have ignored the Word, or only pretended to be interested in living according to its teachings, when the seals are opened to us in the world of spirits after death we will continue to have no interest. In fact, as the Word is opened and we hear and learn of the love and wisdom of God, we will feel revolted. We will turn away and want to hear no more. As the seals continue to open, revealing how far away from loving God and loving our neighbors we really are because we have not done what the Word teaches, have not loved it, have not studied it we will want to get away from the Word. We will flee from heaven and the angels and find a place in hell with people like ourselves who have no interest in the Lord, the Word, or being kind to other people. In both instances we will judge ourselves by how we respond and react to the opening of the Word.

This is what takes place after death for each of us, preparing us for an eternal marriage relationship with the Lord or an eternal life alone against all the other satans and devils of hell. We will judge ourselves by measuring our habitual loves and thoughts and life next to the Word.

Obviously, the devils and satans in hell would not have minded if there really had been no one to open the scroll. Their selfishness, materialism, and love of dominating over others would never have been exposed. They would have been able to trick the new people coming into the spiritual world and turned them into slaves for their own evil purposes. They would gradually have turned the world of spirits, between heaven and hell, into a realm or kingdom in which they ruled and had all power. Then they would have been able to control all the people in the world so that none of us would have a chance to be good or go to heaven because all the angelic influences from the Lord would have been cut off from us. We would feel only evil desires and think only false rationalizations. We all would have been condemned to an eternal life in hell.

This is why John wept much and grieved. He could see the resulting destruction which would come to the human race if the Word of God was not opened. While we can identify with the personal feeling of despair of ever being changed and saved a feeling induced by the evil spirits with us most of us have difficulty recognizing how the whole human race was threatened by the hells.

Most of us have difficulty believing in our hearts, feeling it, that Jesus Christ saved us from destruction. He did this by being in the world, facing the evil spirits, satans, and devils from hell, and bringing them under His control by resisting their influences. The Lord saved the entire human race, all people of all religions, from eternal damnation.

In the middle of the 1700s the hells had again risen up out of hell and were invading the world of spirits, threatening the human race. They had been able to rise up because people were no longer understanding the Word, which was bound with seven seals. People thought the Word was saying that all one needed to do was to believe God sent His Son into the world to save us and then we would be saved, and that although God was one, there were three people in God. Such ideas brought so much confusion in the world and the world of spirits that the hells were able to rise up again.

The time had come for the Lamb to take the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne and open the seals, to restore order in the spiritual world, and ensure once and for all the freedom of the human race.

In His second advent the Lord opened the seals of the Word and revealed the hidden interior meaning of the parables and stories of the Bible. Through the revelation given by Him through the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg the Lord brought rational light and understanding to the meaning of the Word, both in the world of spirits and on the earth. In His second coming the Lord opened the seals of the book sealed with seven seals. Doing this brought about a massive last judgment in the spiritual world, as all the angels, devils, and spirits responded in their own way to the new heat and light or love and wisdom now available in the spiritual world. Some were attracted and some were repelled. Because the new revelation is not in parables but is given in rational explanations, the ordering of the spiritual world will become permanent.

The elder comforted John by telling Him the Lamb, the Lord in His Divine Human, could and would open the seven seals. This is also why the angels sang a new song, why ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels praised the Lord with loud voices, and why the 24 elders fell down and worshiped Him. They were all rejoicing and praising the Lord because He had made His second advent and was about to perform a Last Judgment which would free every individual in the whole human race to choose his own eternal life. They were rejoicing because they knew that from then on, the whole human race would be free to enter into a rational marriage relationship with the Lord that a new golden age of peace, love, and happiness could come.

This is what is meant by the words of the new song the angels sang:

You are worthy to take the book, and to open its seals,
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God in Your blood,
Out of every tribe and tongue
And people and nation,
And have made us unto our God kings and priests,
And we shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9,10).

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Lessons: Revelation chap. 5, AR 279, 283, 284