

THE BOOK THAT NO ONE COULD OPEN

Perhaps you find books as fascinating as I do. Take for instance a book that was published back in 1976. It contains only 300 pages and yet measures nine feet by ten feet and weighs 557 pounds.

The book, *Golden Book Of Cleveland*, is pretty large too. It measures five feet by seven feet, and is three feet deep. It contains 6,000 pages and weighs approximately two and a half tons.

As far as sets of books, the "British Parliamentary Papers" takes the cake. The set contains 1,112 volumes and weighs in at three and a quarter tons.

The prize for the world's largest book, though, goes to a collection of 729 large marble slabs containing the entire Buddhist Scriptures. This book is a major tourist attraction in the ancient nation of Myanmar.

The Bible also talks about a very unique book. To say that this particular book is old is a gross understatement. It has been around since Adam and Eve walked this earth. Then, the book is very special. In fact, it is so special that not one single solitary human being on earth today would be allowed to open it. Want to know more about this book?

PLEASE TURN IN YOUR BIBLES TO REVELATION 5. WE ARE GOING TO WORK OUR WAY THROUGH THIS CHAPTER THIS MORNING AS WELL AS NEXT WEEK

Verses 1-4, **"Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?' But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because**

no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”

Now let me ask you....,

- What is the big deal with this book?
- What book is it?
- Why is God holding it?
- Why would someone cry over the fact that the book can't be opened?
- What importance, if any, does the book hold for you and me?

Do you have any answers? Maybe I do.

To get some answers, we have to go back in time to the creation of Earth and to Earth's first two inhabitants, Adam and Eve. When God created the earth, He gave to Adam dominion, power, and authority over this young earth.

Adam watched over creation; he named the objects of creation. The fact that he named something was God's way of saying he had power over it. In a real sense, Adam was the man. Please turn to someone and say, "Adam was the man."

He was like the king over everyone and everything that God had placed here on this planet.

- If someone would have wanted to obtain a fishing license, he or she would have had to go through Adam.
- If he or she wanted to build a road, cut down a tree, or build a garment factory, again Adam was the person to see.

He had tremendous power. In truth, God had created everything, but then He turned it all over to Adam including the title deed to this planet.

Had these two people behaved themselves, they could have literally lived forever in that garden, had children, grandchildren, and so forth, and enjoyed heaven on earth. That was the Lord's plan and purpose.

We do not know just how long this first couple enjoyed paradise before they missed everything up. It could have been a very short or even a very long time. We do not know for the Bible does not say.

As they say, though, all good things must come to an end. That old adage certainly fits this story well. Both Adam and Eve disobeyed God, gave in to Satan's temptation, and in the process lost:

- Innocence,
- Paradise,
- Relationship with God,
- You name it.

It all went down the tubes.

They also lost two additional things that relate to this book:

1. DOMINION OVER THE EARTH

Simply put, Adam was displaced. In essence, the plant shut down and moved to Mexico and a new owner came in and took over the operations. That new owner was non other than the one that had tempted Adam and Eve to sin – Satan.

As a result, dominion, authority, over earth passed from Adam to the devil. In Matthew 4 we find Jesus being tempted in the wilderness. Listen to verses 8-10 from the *New Living Translation*, “**Next the Devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him the nations of the world and all their glory. ‘I will give it all to you,’ he said, ‘if you will only kneel down and**

worship me.’ ‘Get out of here, Satan,’ Jesus told him. ‘For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God; serve only him.’”

Did you catch the fact that when the devil offered Jesus the nations of the world, Jesus did not deny his claim? Why? The devil had them to offer. Dominion, again, had been given to him when Adam fell into sin.

Think with me of the Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:10. There Jesus taught His disciples to pray, **“your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”**

It is obvious from this that the Lord’s kingdom is yet to come, the Lord’s will is yet to be accomplished. If this is not the Lord’s kingdom, and the things around us are not the Lord’s will, then whose kingdom and will is it?

I am glad that you asked:

- Three times, in Scripture, our Lord referred to Satan as the **“prince of this world.”**
- Paul called him the **“god of this age”** and the **“prince of the power of the air.”**
- John wrote that **“the world around us is under the power and control of the evil one”** in 1 John 5:19 (*New Living translation*).

Satan rules. The utter chaos that surrounds us today on this planet is proof positive that earth is presently tight within the clutches of that one whom the Bible describes as the thief – the one who comes to **“steal, kill, and destroy”** (John 10:10).

- Did you watch on the news Friday as a madman in Los Angeles repeatedly shot another man right in front of a whole host of reporters and cameramen? It

happened live on television in real time. Crazy!

- Wildfires are destroying large sections of Southern California.
- A Lutheran pastor was hit and killed this past week by a hit-and-run driver as she was crossing a street in Madison. The driver, knowing that he or she had hit someone, simply sped away leaving the victim to die.
- Look at these headlines. **(SHOW NEWSPAPERS/BOOK)**

What is happening? I will tell you. This world is engulfed in sin and evil, greed and envy, war and conflict. This kingdom reflects it's evil king and his evil will!

Several years ago I ran an ambulance service just outside of Houston. One day we received a call from a young mother who cried out that her small baby was not breathing. In less than five minutes we had a crew at the scene. A quick look at the child revealed that nothing could be done. The baby was dead and had been for some time.

The mama was somewhere around 20 years old. She worked at the local Dairy Queen. The baby's father had been at home all day watching television. While he thought it was strange that the baby had slept so long, it never occurred to him that he should go in and check to make sure everything was all right.

As I was talking to the mother, the next door neighbor came rushing into the house. She immediately hugged the crying mom and preceded to tell her over and over that what had happened that day was in fact God's will. While I knew that was not the time nor the place to enter into a theological debate, I nonetheless wanted to scream, "Who commissioned you to determine whether or not God killed that baby? How do you know that such a thing was actually the will of Almighty God? Who are you to accuse Him of such a terrible thing?" In my own opinion, though, what happened there and then was not God's will

but rather the will of him that is called “the enemy”, “the evil one”, “the destroyer”, “That Old Dragon”, and many other similar names in scripture. I behaved myself, though, and kept my mouth shut.

The point begs to be made, God’s kingdom and God’s will was revealed to us in the Garden of Eden. Satan’s evil will and his evil kingdom is revealed to us everyday in the newspapers and on the evening news!

Ever since Adam lost this inheritance there has been a constant effort on the part of man to win it back; to reclaim paradise, to establish a Utopia, to bring heaven to earth. The human race has tried to do this through government, philosophy, military might, as well as religion, but all have failed. Mankind cannot rescue himself from his own pit of sin, and thus he stands impotent in the face of the evil one.

Have you ever lost something only to realize after you lost it just how priceless, how special it was to you? No doubt, that is how Adam and Eve must have felt after they forfeited their place and standing before God. After they forfeited their dominion and authority over earth. Once gone, it was long gone.

2. EARTH’S TITLE DEED

Just a brief word here as I want to cover this more in detail next week.

God had given the deed to earth over to Adam. At his fall, that deed passed back to God the Creator – the One who had given it in the first place.

We find it back in God’s hand here in Revelation 5. You see, in my opinion, the unopened book that we are talking about this morning is Earth’s Title Deed.

PLEASE RETURN WITH ME NOW TO REVELATION 5:2-4

The Bible says, **“And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?’ But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.”**

The passage speaks of a mighty angel. Do you realize that the word angel is found more often in the book of Revelation than any other book in the Bible by far. Out of all 66 books of the Bible, one in four references to angels can be found in this one book alone. The point? I believe that in these end times, the ministry of angels will be kicked into high gear.

In this my text, John again saw a powerful angel. What made this angel appear to be so strong is not revealed, but he had the authority to speak in the presence of God. We do not know who this angel is, but, some believe he is indeed the archangel Gabriel due to his high office and due to the fact that his name means “strength of God.”

Regardless of who this angel is, he could pump up the volume. The passage notes that his shout could be heard by everyone both in heaven and on earth as well as those under the earth.

He shouted out the most penetrating question in the whole of human history: **“Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?”** But, sadly, the answer came back, **“no one.”** No one, either living or dead, was worthy to open the scroll and look inside. Please say, **“no one.”**

I want you to catch the scope of this issue:

- No person in heaven was found worthy to open the book. Imagine! The holy angels were not worthy enough to approach God and crack the book's covers.
- No person on earth was found worthy: no statesman, no educator, no scientist, no minister, no prophet, was accounted worthy enough to approach God and open the book.
- No person under the earth: no person from among the dead—as great as some have been in past history—no person from the past was found worthy to open the book.
 - Abraham was a man of faith, but we know that on occasion his faith failed him.
 - Noah was righteous, but time proved that he was not altogether righteous.
 - Moses was the lawgiver, but he was also a lawbreaker.
 - David was a great king, but he also failed as a king, a husband, and as a father.
 - Paul was an apostle, one of the greatest men to ever live. He also called himself the “**chief of sinners.**”

Due to the obvious failure to find anyone who would qualify to open the book, John wept bitterly. Actually, the passage is speaking of the kind of loud wailing that was normally reserved for intense mourning, such as for a person's death.

Why did he cry? I believe that he wept for several reasons:

1. In Revelation 1 John saw Jesus in His glory and he fell at the Lord's feet as a dead man. Here in chapter 5 he saw God the Almighty. He saw God in His majesty and in His glory seated upon His throne. John cried in utter humility for there in the very presence of God he knew that he had not been found worthy to

open the book either.

2. I think John knew about the book. He knew what it was; what it stood for. Remember, it had writing both on the inside and on the outside. He could look, see, and tell what this great book was.

Since no one could open it, John wondered if that meant that earth was condemned to remain in the hands of the evil one indefinitely.

3. John wept for he knew that justice stood in the balance.

- If no one could open the book, then would that mean that all the wrongs of earth would not be righted?
- That the righteous would not be vindicated?
- That the wicked would go unpunished?

Would that mean that the Lord's kingdom would not come and that His will would not be done?

4. John wept, for he realized that God's glorious redemption plan for mankind could never be fully realized until the book was opened.

LET'S MOVE NOW TO REVELATION 5:5

“Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.’”

Before I continue, I feel as if I must take a moment or two and explain some of the terms found in this verse:

FIRST, ELDERS. The Bible is not talking about a group of old people here. Rather it is generally thought that the elders represent the saints that have both died and gone to heaven as well as those who will go to be with the Lord in the Rapture. Think people, godly people.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH is another term that I want to address. As you can see behind me, we have a beautiful banner that speaks of the Lion of the tribe of Judah. I can almost hear someone saying, what is that all about?

The book of Genesis highlights the stories of three great men – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is father, son, and grandson, in that order. One of the twelve sons (tribes) of Jacob was Judah. God promised that His Son, the Messiah or Savior, Jesus, would come from the tribe of Judah. If you will look at Matthew 1:3, you will find Judah listed in the genealogy of Jesus. The symbol of the tribe of Judah was a lion. Jesus, a descendant of the tribe of Judah, is therefore known as The Lion of the Tribe of Judah. That is one of His many names.

Help me, now. The Lion of the tribe of Judah is otherwise known as... Jesus.

THE ROOT OF DAVID is the third and final term that I want to define for you. God promised King David of the Old Testament that one of his descendants would be the Messiah/Savior. Again, Jesus is a fulfillment of that prophecy. His earthly mother was Mary, a descendant of David. Jesus is therefore the Root of David.

Suddenly, one of the elders told John to stop crying. He said that someone had been found that could open the book. Do you remember the old E. F. Hutton commercials on TV? The catch line was, "When E. F. Hutton speaks, people

listen.” The commercial would always show a group of people visiting or traveling, or working. Someone in the group would eventually say, “My broker is E. F. Hutton, and E. F. Hutton says....” And at that, everyone in the commercial would immediately stop whatever they were doing and turn and listen.

That is kind of what I think happens in this picture. All at once the throne room of God grows quiet. Heads turn, crying stops, mouths drop open...

Then a buzz starts to circulate throughout the vast expanse...

- “Someone had been found who can open the book...”
- “Someone had been found who can open the book...”

Someone else asks, “Who?” “Where?” “How?”

WELL I MUST CLOSE. I WILL THIS MESSAGE UP AT THIS POINT NEXT WEEK.

Oh, by the way, Revelation 20:12 says, “**ANOTHER** book was opened ... the book of life.” Anyone’s name who was not found in that book was condemned to eternity without God. Is your name in the book?