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The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David Has Triumphed 5: 1-5

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David has triumphed DIG: What do you think makes the scroll so significant? What dilemma does the sealed scroll pose? Why is Christ the only One worthy enough to open it? How are the two comings of Jesus symbolized in John's vision? What do the titles the Lion of the Tribe of Judah and the Root of David mean? Why was it necessary for one of the elders to comfort John, who already knew that Jesus had triumphed? How did this message comfort first-century believers?

REFLECT: Do you think Yeshua sees your tears? Do you think He cares? Do you think the Lord is working behind the scenes for your benefit? When all has seemed lost, has He ever taken action on your behalf? Is Jesus the Lion of the Tribe of David to you? Where does your hope rest toady?

Chapter 4 honors **God the Father**. **He** is the One who sits **on the throne** in heaven, and is the ultimate source of authority and praise. In **Chapter 5** the attention shifts from **God the Father** to **God the Son**. The Bible teaches us that when we honor **the Son** we honor **the Father**. **The Father** has given all authority to **His Son (John 5:22)**. Scripture also teaches that **the** heavenly **Father** has given **the Son** a Kingdom, and it is **His** will that all creation, whether in heaven, on earth or under the earth, bow the knee to **Christ** as **Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14, 19:16).** This book is uniquely a revelation of **Yeshua**, demanding our absolute submission and praise. Thus, from **Chapter 5** to **Chapter 22** we are constantly reminded of who is in charge. **Jesus Christ** alone has the ability to control the future.

The scroll John saw was in **God's right hand, with writing on both sides (5:1a)**. Being in **His right hand** indicates **His** authority and power. Whatever is in **the scroll** has been designed, planned, and will be executed from the will of **ADONAI**. It originated from **His right hand**. This **scroll** contains the title deed to

the earth, which will be given to **God the Son**. Unlike other deeds, it will not give the details of *what* **Jesus** will inherit, but rather *how* **He** will regain **His** rightful inheritance. **He** will do so by means of **His** wrath poured out on the earth. But **the scroll** will not only judge those on **the earth**, it will also redeem, or buy **the earth** back, from Satan, his demons and his followers.

Later in the book **John** will symbolically **eat** this **scroll**. And when **he eats it**, it turns **as sweet as honey** to **his** taste, **but it will turn** his **stomach sour (10:9-10)**. It tastes **sweet** because **John** wants **Jesus** to act in judgment and take back the **earth** that is rightfully **His**. But the realization of the terrible doom awaiting unbelievers turned that initial **sweet** taste into bitterness. Something similar happened in the book of **Ezeki'el**. In **his** vision of heaven, **Ezekiel** said: **I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, which God unrolled before me.** (Normally, scrolls **were written** only on one side. But like **John's scroll,** this **scroll** was **written** on **both sides**, and **it** contained **words of lament and mourning and woe**). **And God said to Ezeki'el, "Son of man, eat this scroll; then go** back **and speak to the house of Isra'el. So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.** And **it became as sweet as honey in my mouth (Ezeki'el 2:9** to **3:3).**[161] The implication of it being written **on both sides** is that it points to the importance and the terrible nature of the events that are being recorded.

The book of **Zechariah** also gives us some insight as to *why* the terrible events of the Great Tribulation will take place **(Zechariah 5:1-4)**. **He** also saw **a scroll**, a very large **flying scroll**, and like **the two tablets of the Testimony (Exodus 32:15)**, it was written on both sides. **And God said to Zechariah, "This is the curse that is going out over the whole** earth**; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished."** This refers to one of the first four commandments. **"And according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished**," and this refers to one of the last six of the Ten Commandments. **The curse** of **the scroll** is directed against those who violate one of the commandments on each side of **the two tablets** – the eighth commandment against stealing on the back **(Exodus 20:15)** and the third commandment against swearing **falsely** by misusing the name of **the LORD** on the front **(Exodus 20:7)**.[162] The point is, the terrible events of the Great Tribulation will happen because of a total violation of **God's** moral standards that are revealed in the TaNaKh, beautifully displayed in **Christ** and constantly taught in the B'rit Chadashah.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** love and holiness! Being loved is wonderful, but we also must remember that **Your** love is wrapped in your perfect purity, in complete holiness. **You** cannot tolerate sin and so you gave an extremely costly offering when **You** gave **Your** own **Son** to die as our sacrificial **lamb (John 1:29),** to pay the punishment for our sins so all who love and follow **You** could receive **Your** holy righteousness **(Second Corinthians 5:21)** thru which we are then able to enter **Your** holy heaven. Though the world loves to quote: **For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16),** the whole truth of **God's** message needs to be listened to. **The one who believes in Him is not condemned; but whoever does not believe has been condemned already, because he has not put his trust in the name of the one and only Ben-Elohim. (John 3:18).** Both ideas of salvation and condemnation are in the same verse at the end of the chapter. **He who trusts in the Son has eternal life. He who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him (John 3:36). O God**, **Your wrath** is to be feared for **Your** holiness demands that sin is punished **(Isaiah 53:5-6).** The pain of the Great Tribulation is because of man's sin, which you cannot tolerate. We bow in worship of **You** and ask that **You** open the hearts of our family and friends to choose to love and to follow **You** as their **Lord** and **Savior**. In your holy **Son's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

This scroll was **sealed with seven seals (5:1b).** Sealing **a scroll** was a common and important practice in Biblical times. The wills of both Emperor Vespasian and Cesar Augustus, for example, were secured with **seven seals**. For such a document, a scribe would procure a long roll of parchment and begin writing. After a period of writing he would stop, roll the parchment just enough to cover his words. Then he would **seal the scroll** at that point with wax. Then he would resume writing, stop again, roll **the scroll**, and add another **seal**. By the time he was finished, he would have **sealed the scroll seven** times. Then **the scroll** is like a will, and would be read a section at a time, after each **seal** was opened.[163] The only one who could break **the seals**, was the one who would receive the inheritance after the death of the testator, or the one who made the will. In this case, **the Messiah** is both the testator and the one who will receive the inheritance.

Jeremiah 32:9-15 gives us a good picture of such a **scroll**. In the last days of the southern kingdom of **Judah**, just before the fall of Jerusalem, **Jeremiah's** cousin Hanamel needed help. He was desperate to sell a field he owned in **Jeremiah's**

hometown of Anathoth, near Jerusalem. The Babylonian army was coming into the Land like a flood and once they conquered **Judah**, Hanamel's field would be worthless. But contrary to human wisdom, and in obedience to **God's** command, **Jeremiah** bought **his** cousins field **and put the sealed** copy of **the scroll in a clay jar so** it **would last a long time** as a sign that the Babylonian captivity would not last forever (see my commentary on **Jeremiah, to see link click Fs – Jeremiah Buys a Field**).

Who had the power to defeat the Devil and his demons, to do away with sin and to reverse the curse on all the earth? **And John saw a mighty angel**, Gabriel himself, shouting **in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"** In answer to Gabriel's question there is only silence (since the **angel** is not named in scripture, it may be Gabriel because his name denotes **mighty**). The angels of heaven wait in silence. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, **Job**, Moses, David, **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Dani'el**, the apostles and everyone from the Dispensation of Grace all stand in silence. After scouring every level of the universe, it seems like **no one in heaven** (**God's** holy angels) **or on earth** (all of humanity) **or under the earth** (Satan and all of his fallen angels) **could open the scroll or even look inside it (5:2-3).**

Overwhelmed with grief and sadness **John wept and wept**, *literally kept on shedding many tears,* **because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside it (5:4). Wept** is from *klaio,* and is the same word used to describe **Jesus'** weeping over Jerusalem **(Luke 19:41)**, and **Peter's** bitter weeping after betraying **Christ** three times **(Luke 22:62)**. It is a word that expresses uncontrollable sobbing and heaving. **John** was broken hearted because unless that book can be opened there is no **hope**. There is only one **hope** for this world, **the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Yeshua the Messiah. He** is **the blessed hope (Titus 2:13)**. No one can help us but **Jesus**.

Interestingly enough, this is the only time we see **tears in heaven**. **John's tears** represent **the tears** of **God's** people throughout the ages. Those **tears** represent your **tears** and my **tears** as we experience the trials, the sufferings, the heartaches and indescribable disappointments of this life. Sometimes the pain is so great we don't know if we can go on. But the good news is that one-day **God** promises to **wipe away every tear from** our **eyes (7:17** and **21:4)**. In the midst of our pain, sometimes that promise is hard to imagine, but we continue to **hope** in **Him (Job 13:15)**. That is why **we wait for the blessed hope.**

But **ADONAI's** mercy and grace would never allow the world to drown in a sea of hopelessness. In the midst of **John's** despair, **YHVH** was about to take action. One of **the twenty-four elders** told **John not** to **weep**. Why was it necessary for one of **the elders** to comfort **John**, who already knew that **Jesus** had **triumphed**? Because **John** did that which we so easily do. **He** lost sight of the victory of **the Lamb**, which always results in hopelessness and **tears**. How very often do we sadden **Jesus** with our **weeping** and discouragement. We are often ready to give up in spite of the fact that **He** has already achieved the final victory.[164]

Then **John's** attention was drawn to a new **Person** emerging at the throne of **God**. No human or angel can buy back the universe. But there is **One** who can. **He** is **our great God and Savior Jesus Christ** and here **He** is identified by the first of **His** two messianic titles. The elder said: **See, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.** The title **the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** comes from Jacob's blessing. When Jacob was dying, he called his twelve sons around him, and prophesied to Leah's fourth born: **You are a lion's cub, O Judah . . . the scepter** (or the right to rule) **will not depart from Judah until He comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is His (Genesis 49:9-10)**. In **John's** day the Romans had destroyed Jerusalem, the heart of **Judah**, and the Jews were scattered throughout the world. **The scepter** had indeed departed **from Judah**, and **the One** to whom it belonged had already come, been rejected and crucified. **The Lord Jesus** is **the Lion of the Tribe of Judah**, but he is also **the Root of David (Isaiah 11:1** and **10)**. **Yeshua the Messiah** is in absolute control.

The title **the Root**, or descendant, **of David** comes from a prophecy in **Second Samuel 7:5-16**, the great chapter of **God's** covenant with **David**, where **ADONAI** said: **Your house and your kingdom will** last **forever before Me; your throne**

will be established forever. At that time **ADONAI** promised King **David** that one of **his** descendants would be **the Messiah**. **Jesus** fulfilled that prophecy. **Jesus'** earthly mother was Mary, a descendant of **David** (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ Ai – The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary**). Consequently, **Jesus** has the right to rule because **He** is the fulfillment of the prophecies made in the TaNaKh. All of those prophecies will be fulfilled at **Christ's** Second Coming when **He** establishes **His** Kingdom.[165]

Yeshua will be the only **One worthy** to **open the scroll** because **He has triumphed. The scroll** (or the will) was written in the name of **Christ**, since it is **His** inheritance. **He** is also **the One** who died, and because of the resurrection, thus **He** is **the** only **One worthy** to **open His** own **scroll** (or will). It is the most unusual will ever written because all of the inheritance goes to the one who died! In the Greek this word is in the aorist active tense and points to a once for all time victory. At the cross **He triumphed** over sin **(Romans 8:3)**, death **(Hebrews 2:14-15)**, and the forces of hell **(Col 2:15; 1 Peter 3:19)**. **For everyone born of God overcomes the world (1 John 5:4)**, because **He has triumphed**. **John** stopped **sobbing** long enough to see **the Lion** prepare **to open the scroll and its seven seals (5:5)**. What excitement there will be as all of **heaven** holds its collective breath, waiting for **Jesus** to tear off **the seals, open the scroll** and take back what is rightfully **His**.

John was writing to first-century believers who were suffering greatly under persecution. Many had lost all their possessions and were being threatened with death if they did not renounce **the Lord**. The evil that confronted them seemed so vast that they undoubtedly were tempted to think that darkness would triumph.

We too can be tempted in this way when we are engulfed in suffering – whether it be because of disease, life's problems, moral sufferings, or the sinful state of our society. **John** may well have written to strengthen and encourage the believers of his age, but his words can speak to us also, giving us a firm foundation for our security and assurance. **ADONAI** is on our side. **God the Son has triumphed** over evil and has already paid for every sin you will ever commit past, present or future. That's why faith is so important. There is no **hope** except what **Christ** has *already* done. You need to believe in what **Yeshua** has *already* done for you, not believing what you can do for **Him**.

In **his** vision, **John** saw **Jesus** prepared to regain **His** rightful inheritance. Such a vision – and the truths that such a vision reveals – can give us great comfort and

security. Every one of **God's** intentions toward us is for our good, not for evil. Every thought **He** has for us had to do with our blessing, our prosperity, and our growth in **His** holiness. At one time, it looked as if **no one** could **open the scroll** of **God's** plan to see it through to completion. But now, In **Yeshua the Messiah**, we can surrender ourselves into **His** hands and obey **Him**, knowing that **He** will never abandon or betray us.

Lord, *I surrender myself into* ***Your*** *hands. Cover me and all my family with* ***Your*** *infinite love, mercy, grace and power.* ***Father****, may* ***Your*** *Kingdom come and* ***Your*** *will be done in my heart and throughout* ***the earth****.*[166]