

# **Revelation 05 - The Lamb on the Throne; Opening the Scroll; Worship of the Lamb; The Song of the Redeemed**

## IV. After These Things (Rev 4:1–22:21)

- (1) Before the Tribulation (Rev 4:1–5:14)
  - (D) The Scroll (5:1-14)
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        - (b) 24 Elders (5:14b)

## **Revelation 5**

- (1) Before the Tribulation (Rev 4:1–5:14)
  - (D) The Scroll (5:1-14)
    - (a) An observation (5:1)

1 I saw in the **right hand** of Him who sat on the throne **a scroll** written inside and on the **back, sealed** up with seven seals.

1 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.

1 Then I saw in the right hand of the one who sits on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the outside, sealed with seven seals.

1 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.

- "...right hand" - suggests its Source, His authority and power adequate to translate the contents of the scroll into action (as He sat on the throne)

- "...a scroll" - represents the title deed to the earth; see note: **What is the Scroll?** below.

Two views:

1. The title deed to the earth, symbolizing the right to rule as king of the earth. Adam forfeited it and Jesus purchased it back with His blood. Now someone has to meet the requirements to open the scroll by removing its seals.

2. The decree/plan of God for taking back control over His creation

- The judgments of God upon the earth that will, when fully dispersed, result in the re-taking of the earth by Jesus Christ, who will then rule and reign forever.
- The 7th Seal contains the seven Trumpet judgments (8:6–11:15), and the 7th Trumpet contains the seven Bowl judgments (Rev 16-19)

— The contents of the scroll are never read, they are just enacted

— The scroll is the storyline of Revelation, the direction where human history is headed...each time Jesus removes a seal from the scroll, a judgment comes upon the earth  
— This process repeats over and over again, as Satan's grasp upon the earth is slowly loosened until the end, when an angel throws him into Hades

— "...back" - a scroll with conditions on the exterior and sealed suggests a title deed

— "...sealed" - *katesphragismenon*, stronger than the simple verb for sealed; the intensification of meaning emphasizes the security of the sealing and the value of the secrets it contains

[OT reference: Ezek 2:9-10; Dan 12:4]

(b) A question (5:2)

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is **worthy** to open the scroll **and** to break its seals?"

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"

2 I also saw a powerful angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its 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?"

- If the seals remain unbroken, the scroll remains sealed...that's a problem because if that's the case, God's authority over the earth will not be reclaimed
- So the question becomes, who is qualified ("worthy") to remove the seals and open scroll? This question is answered in v9,12
- "...worthy" - the angel's call was not for someone strong or intelligent enough, it was for someone who was "worthy"
- Worthiness indicates something far above ability...character, accomplishment and appropriate standing are required
- "...and" - *kai*, better translated "even" in this context

(c) An investigation (5:3)

3 And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth **was able** to open the scroll or to look into it.

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.

3 No one in heaven, on earth, or under the earth could open the scroll or look inside it.

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

- A comprehensive investigation is done to look into who is worthy or qualified to remove the seals and open the scroll...but it ends up fruitless

- No one in heaven is worthy...the 4 living creatures, the 24 Elders, all of the angelic beings...no one found qualified. No one on the earth was qualified, and certainly no one under the earth (hell) was worthy.

- The figure of speech (or rhetorical device) used here is a merism...giving the outer edges of something, then it's assumed to include everything inside or in between (i.e. God watches over us when we wake up and when we lie down doesn't mean that He only watches over us in the morning and evening...it's a merism, giving the outer edges, but assumed to include everything in between).

- "...was able" - *edynato*, imperfect tense meaning that creation's unworthiness to open the scroll was a chronic and on-going condition

(d) A lamentation (5:4)

4 Then I *began* to **weepgreatly** because no one was found **worthy** to open the scroll or to look into it.

4 Then I *began* to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it;

4 I began to cry bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or look inside it.

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

- "...weep greatly" - *klaiō polys*, John is in emotional travail at the prospect that this scroll would remain sealed because there was no one found worthy to remove the seals

— This wasn't John emoting and crying tears of sadness; this is John having a heart attack

— If no one removes the seals and opens the scroll, the earth will remain in its current sinful, chained state, never to be released from its bondage and forever from the grasp of its rightful Ruler and the world would continue indefinitely under satanic bondage.

Essentially, Satan wins if the scroll is not unsealed.

— John realized that if Someone wasn't found worthy to open the scroll to reveal God's prophetic plan, Satan's bondage and rule over the earth would continue indefinitely. God's plans and their execution to reclaim His creation would remain hidden and postponed.

— This description matches how Peter felt after his third betrayal of Christ (Matt 26:75; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:62); it's the same verb used to describe the way Christians should feel about their sin (James 4:9)

- Scriptures demonstrating Satan as the ruler of this world: Job 1:7; 2:2; Luke 4:5-7; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 6:12; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 4:4; 5:19. This authority of Satan will remain forever as long as the title deed (scroll) remains sealed.

- "...worthy" - the angel's call was not for someone strong or intelligent enough, it was for someone who was "worthy"

— Worthiness indicates something far above ability...character, accomplishment and appropriate standing are required

(e) A consolation (5:5a)

(f) A manifestation (5:5b-6)

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 be able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

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."

5 "Stop crying," one of the elders told me. "Look! The Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered. He can open the scroll and its seven seals."

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."

- "...Stop weeping" - *mē klaiō*, imperative mood in Greek, a command

- The Elder sees beyond John's limited human perspective that such sorrow is inappropriate because the Elder knows of Someone who is worthy to open the scroll
  - "...Lion that is from the tribe of Judah" - in Gen 49, Jacob prophesied that the Messiah would come through the line of Judah (Gen 49:8-10)
  - "...Root of David" - a reference to Is 11:1,10 (Cf. 53:2); refers to the lowly beginnings of the Messiah who will rule over David's kingdom
  - "Root" - suggests a stump of a tree that has been cut down, out of which develops a "root" that eventually becomes a tree again
  - The connotation here is that the nation of Israel has been "cut down," but now there is One from the dynasty of David who has the right to rule and the tree will flourish again
  - Both are OT titles of the Messiah, who would fulfill the OT promises of salvation and rule
  - "...has overcome" - aorist tense, indicating that the overcoming has already occurred. Jesus isn't *about* to overcome; it's not predicted that He *will* overcome; He's not in the process of overcoming...He has *already* overcome through His death, burial, resurrection and ascension.
  - He is qualified to open the scrolls and the seals because of what He has *already done*
  - Christ's death and resurrection are the past events referred to here. However, the process of Satan's eviction (beginning with the Seal judgments) hasn't begun yet, so this cannot refer to Satan's defeat.
  - The Kingdom Now interpretation of this verse is that since Jesus has overcome (past tense), the kingdom has begun. However, the words "kingdom" (*basileia*) or "to reign" (*basileuō*) are not found in this verse.
  - If John was actually communicating a present form of a spiritual kingdom, he would've certainly used one or both of these words to communicate that point.
  - Note that Jesus' right to the scroll is viewed from His relationship to Israel rather than from His relationship to the Church
- [OT reference: Gen 49:9-10; Is 1:1,10]

### **Satan's Defeat (Conviction)**

An analogy of v5 is: Satan was judged and found guilty at the Cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8). He is now a defeated (convicted) foe, but he is still ruler of this present world (2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 4:4; 5:19), awaiting the sentencing phase of his trial. The sentencing phase does not begin until Jesus opens the seven-sealed scroll.

When you understand Satan's position, defeated (convicted) and awaiting sentencing, you can understand why he wants to take as many people down with him as possible. This is why Satan works so hard to deceive today...there is something open to us (salvation) that is not open to him. This is why we're in a spiritual conflict, and why it's more difficult for

believers to do things than it is for non-believers, because we are constantly opposed by Satan.

### **Satan's Progressive Defeat**

1. Initial eviction from heaven (Is 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17)
2. Eden (Gen 3:15)
3. Pre-diluvian world (1 Peter 3:19-20)
4. Cross (John 12:31; 16:11; Col 2:15; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8)
5. Midpoint of the Tribulation (Rev 12:9)
6. Beginning of the Millennium (Rev 20:2-3)
7. End of the Millennium (Rev 20:10)

The reason why John states that Jesus has overcome in 5:5 is because event #4 has taken place, not because events 5-7 have taken place. The Cross was Jesus' defeat of Satan, to rescue mankind from sin and reconcile them to God. This laid the foundation for Satan's ultimate defeat.

If you don't consider this timeline, outlined throughout the Bible, you don't have the capacity to harmonize the passages that teach on one hand that Satan is a defeated foe, but on the other hand that he is currently the "prince of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30), the "god of this age" (2 Cor 4:4). You can't understand why believers need to put on their spiritual armor (Eph 6).

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

**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.

**6** Then I saw a lamb standing in the middle of the throne, the four living creatures, and the elders. He looked like he had been slaughtered. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.

**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.

- "...four living creatures" - throughout Revelation, if something is happening on earth, it's explained by one of the living creatures. If something is going on in heaven, it's explained by one of the 24 Elders.

- In Rev 6 when the seals are opened and things are happening on the earth, the living creatures are explaining
  - "...Lamb" - *arnion*, the diminutive form of *amnos* (lamb), meaning "little lamb"; in v5, Jesus is the Lion; in v6 He is the Lamb
  - The Messiah is characterized here as a "little Lamb" in His 1st Coming; a "Lion" in His 2nd Coming
  - The "little Lamb" was meek and gentle, but the Lion is a picture of strength and majesty. Christ combines both sets of characteristics perfectly.
  - John first introduced Jesus publicly as the "Lamb" (John 1:29)
  - Isaiah compared the One on whom the Lord laid our iniquity on to a lamb led to the slaughter (Is 53:6-7)
  - "Lion," "Root of David," "Lamb" etc.—these are all *Jewish* titles; there are 24 titles of Jesus Christ given in Rev 1, none of them are Jewish. Jewish titles begin in Rev 4 (see note: **Titles of Christ** below)
  - "...standing" - Jesus ascended and sat on His Father's throne; he stood when Stephen was martyred, and He again is standing here
  - Jesus' standing emphasizes that although "He had been slaughtered" He is alive and well, not debilitated or hampered in any way, and is ready, willing, and able (and worthy) to take the scroll and open the seals
  - "...as if slaughtered" - in heaven, Jesus still bears the scars of the cross
  - Jesus still bears the scars so that when we're in heaven, we can look at those wounds and scars and understand why we are there
  - "...seven horns" - power, authority (Deut 22:17; 1 Kings 22:11; Zech 1:18; Ps 75:4); "seven" denotes the fullness of His power
  - The Antichrist's kingdom is also described as having seven horns (originally 10, three were subdued, Dan 7:20,24)
  - A "horn" is a common OT symbol for power or strength, and it came to represent kingly authority (Num 23:22; Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:1; 2 Sam 22:3; 1 Kings 22:11; Ps 75:4; 132:17; Dan 7:20-21; 8:5)
  - Also, honor (1 Sam 2:1-10; Ps 89:17,24; Ps 112:9-10; 148:14)
  - "...seven eyes" - introspection, complete knowledge; omniscience
  - "...seven spirits of God" - the fullness of the Holy Spirit (4:5; Cf. Is 11:2)
- [OT reference: Is 11:2; Zech 3:8-9; 4:10]

### **Titles of Christ**

There were 24 titles were used of Jesus Christ in Rev 1-3. These titles apply to Him in His present role *and revealed to the Church*. From now on we see *Jewish* titles emphasized.

Israel is coming back to center stage as the end of human history approaches. All of earth's history is moving toward a climax, and the key to it all is the nation Israel.

(g) A reception (5:7)

- 7 And **He came and took** the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.
- 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.
- 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sits on the throne.
- 7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.
  - "...He" - the Lamb, Jesus Christ
  - "...came and took" - after an investigation on who is worthy to open the scroll, the scope of which was in heaven, on the earth and under the earth, Jesus Christ was identified as the only Person worthy and qualified
    - By permitting the Lamb to take the scroll, the One sitting upon the throne authorizes Him in a symbolic way to execute His plan for the redemption of the world
    - Once Jesus has the scroll in His hands, He will begin to break each of the seals, progressively, until all seven seals are broken
    - The breaking of each seal will progressively loosen Satan's grip as ruler of this earth; in the same way, God progressively released Pharaoh's grip on the Israelites with each subsequent plague
    - Identifying a Person who is qualified to open the scroll is the foundational event, which will then unleash the remaining events. Once those events begin, they cannot be stopped.
    - Once the scroll is in Jesus' hands, the countdown to Satan's demise begins (Cf. 12:12)
    - The exchange of the scroll from God the Father to Jesus Christ is a fulfillment of Rev 1:1: "...the revelation...which God gave Him to show"

(h) A reaction (5:8-14)

(i) 4 Living Creatures & 24 Elders (5:8-10)

(a) Worshippers (5:8)

- 8 When He had taken the scroll, the **four living creatures** and the **twenty-four elders** fell down before the **Lamb, each one** holding a harp and **golden bowls full of incense**, which are the prayers of the saints.
- 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.
- 8 When the lamb had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders bowed down in front of him. Each held a harp and a gold bowl full of incense, the prayers of the saints.

**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.

- Jesus taking the scroll marks the initiation of proceedings to convert its contents into reality and eventually usher in the promised kingdom
  - Jesus taking possession of the scroll evoked an explosion of worship unparalleled in history because it signaled that Christ would begin judging the world
  - This is intelligent worship, based on what Jesus has done (v9) and is about to do (v10)
  - The better we understand truth, the better we understand doctrine, the better our worship should become. Worship is not about feelings or emotions (although those are often part of worship), it's about a response to truth. The more truth we understand, the better our worship.
  - This is similar to the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:39-40), where the Pharisees told the Jesus to stop the people from worshiping Him. Jesus told them that if the people became silent, the stones would cry out.
  - Worship should not be just another Christian ritual. We should approach worship with this type of expectation knowing that our victory is secure.
  - "...four living creatures" - the angelic realm
  - "...twenty-four elders" - the raptured church
  - "...Lamb" - Jesus Christ
  - "...each one" - *hekastos*, only the 24 Elders had harps and the golden vials
  - Only the 24 Elders are "holding" (*echontes*) harps, thus it is only the 24 Elders who offer worship in v9
  - "...harp" - more than any other instrument in Scripture, a harp is used in direct praise and worship of God
  - "...golden bowls full of incense" - the vials contained (represent) the prayers of the saints; these prayers are like the fragrant scent of burning incense to Him
  - In the OT, the offering of incense was a priestly duty (Num 16:6-7) so the Elders were functioning in a priestly role
- [OT reference: Ps 111:2]

(b) Worship (5:9-10)

(1) Redemption (5:9)

**9** And **they** \*sang a **new song**, saying, "**Worthy** are You to take the scroll and to break its seals; for You were slaughtered, and You purchased **people for God with Your blood** from **every tribe, language, people, and nation**.

**9** And they \*sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and

tongue and people and nation.

9 They sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered. With your blood you purchased people for God from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

9 And they sung 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;

- The 24 Elders are directing praise and worship directly to Jesus Christ (the Lamb) here for what He did in the past; worship is always guided by truth

- "...they" - the 24 Elders only (not including the four living creatures; see note on v8)

- "...new song" - very common in the Psalms (Ps 33:3; 40:3; 98:1; 96:1; 144:9; 149:1) relating to songs sung on festal occasions and celebrating new mercies from God, especially His deliverance from distress

— In the "new song" of Is 42:10 the words have fuller meaning to the deeper sense of the "new things" in Is 42:9. The deeper sense is that however great the glories of things in the past, those will be dim in comparison to the splendor of things to come.

- "...Worthy" - the Lamb receives honor as being worthy because of four things (v9-10):

1. His death ("for thou wast slain")

2. His redemption of a people for God ("hast redeemed us")

• This includes those yet to be saved (14:2-3; 15:2-4)

• People from every branch of the human family (tribe, language, people, nation) will make up this company

3. He made them ("us") into a kingdom and priests for our God (v10)

4. They ("we") shall reign upon the earth (v10)

- "...for God" - the Person for whose benefit the purchase was made is none other than God Himself

- "...with Your blood" - shows the means whereby the redemption was accomplished. The cost of our redemption, our priesthood, and our future reign on the earth was the blood of the Lamb.

- "...every" - indicates that the number includes some from every background ("tribe, language, people, and nation")

— However, this expression is not all-inclusive as it does not attribute the same universal scope to the redemptive power of Christ's death (unlimited atonement)

— This expression is partitive, meaning only part of the total number actually enjoy the benefits of His death. The benefits of Christ's redemptive work must be appropriated on an individual level by placing faith in Him.

- "...us" [KJV] - a controversial interpretation to some, until they understand the background...

- There are about 240 Greek fragments available on Revelation, but only 24 contain Rev 5:9. Of those 24, 23 of them translate "us" and one translates "them" (Codex Alexandria)
  - There are also many Latin manuscripts, and all of them read "us." Even the primary languages into which the Greek version was soon translated all read "us." The word "us" also appears in the Coptic and Armenian manuscripts.
  - "...tribe" - *phylēs*, same descent; a group belonging to the same clan and united by family lineage
  - "...language" - *glossēs*, people speaking the same language
  - "...people" - *lauo*, unites people of the same race or stock, and possibly of the same interests
  - "...nation" - *ethnous*, bound together by political unity; more broadly, by habits, customs, culture
- [OT reference: Ps 40:3; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Is 42:10; Dan 5:19]

### **Textual Criticism**

If 23 of 24 Greek manuscripts that contain v9 read "us," why do almost all modern translations of the last 50 years leave the "us" out of their translations? The answer goes to the idea of Textual Criticism.

We don't have the original Greek manuscripts of any NT book; but we have multiple copies of the original manuscripts. There is actually some wisdom in God not allowing the original manuscripts to be available today, because the manuscripts themselves would be held in higher esteem than what it says and means, pushing God to the background. You could imagine how the actual manuscripts, if we had them, would be worshiped. In addition, if we only had the original manuscripts, you could imagine how Satan would be working at full force to deface and destroy them.

Instead, we have copies everywhere. This is disturbing for some people, but if you look at comparisons between the multiple copies we have, there are more copies compared to other works of antiquity many times over. We have so many copies because Christianity, at its inception, was evangelistic.

Author	Date Written	Earliest MSS	Time Span	No. MSS
Caesar	100-44 BC	AD 900	1,000 yrs	10
Plato	427-347 BC	900 AD	1,200 yrs	7
Thucydides	460-400 BC	AD 900	1,300 yrs	8
Tacitus	AD 100	AD 1100	1,000 yrs	20
Suetonius	AD 75-160	AD 950	800 yrs	8
Homer ( <i>Iliad</i> )	900 BC	400 BC	500 yrs	643
<i>New Testament</i>	AD 40-100	AD 125	25-50 yrs	>24,000!

Where textual criticism comes in, these 24,000+ NT manuscripts agree with each other much higher than 99% of the time, and *never* relate to any core/cardinal issue in Christianity. There are, however, times when they don't agree with each other in minute details. That's where a "text critic" comes in to try to find out where there is a disagreement.

So what do you do when you have different manuscripts say different things? The textual critic evaluates the "variants" to come up with the correct version, which would've been included in the original manuscripts.

The NASB follows a mindset that believes "the earlier the better," and Codex Alexandrinus is the earliest of 24 available manuscripts on Rev 5:9. It is also the *only* one that uses the third person construction. Each of the remaining 23 manuscripts use the first person (us, we) construction. The KJV/NKJV follows a mindset that believes "the majority is better." So if there is a difference in manuscripts, the NASB will always go with the earlier manuscript and the KJV/NKJV translation will go with the majority of the manuscripts. If there are 10 manuscripts, the earliest one says one thing but the other nine say something different, the NASB will go with the earliest manuscript and the KJV/NKJV will go with the majority other nine manuscripts.

This is why the NASB uses the third person (them, they) in Rev 5:8-10, while the KJV/NKJV uses the first person (us, we). See [Rapture 07 When is the Rapture? - Part 3 \(Rev 4:4\)](#), [The](#)

[Coming Kingdom 72 Kingdom Now Passages: Rev 1:6; 1:9; 3:7](#), and the notes in Mark 16 for more information.

The issue is critical to the argument...if it's truly "us," the Elders are singing a song of redemption about themselves. If it's third person ("them," "men," "people"), the song could refer to those redeemed during the Tribulation. See [Hocking-The Rapture in the Book of Revelation](#) and [Rapture 07 When is the Rapture? - Part 3 \(Rev 4:4\)](#) for more details. Also see [Niemela-Revelation 5, 24 Elders & The Rapture](#) for information on the antiphonal structure of this song.

For further discussion of the textual problem in 5:9-10, see:

- Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, 360
- Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad, eds., *The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), 738-39
- J. Harold Greenlee, *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 116-17
- H. C. Hoskier, *Concerning the Text of the Apocalypse* (London: Quaritch, 1929), 155
- Eberhard Nestle et al., eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche, 1993), 642
- Constantius Tischendorf, ed., *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Leipzig: Giesecke and Devrient, 1886), 935
- Barbara Aland et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 842-44

J.A. Seiss says: "Some critics and expositors have rejected "us" for the reason that it is omitted in the Codex Alexandrinus, and the Ethiopic version; though the latter is not much more than a loose paraphrase. The Codex Sinaiticus, however, which was discovered in 1860, and which is of equal antiquity and authority with the Codex Alexandrinus, contains it. The Codex Basilianus, in the Vatican, contains it. The Latin, Coptic or Memphitic, and Arminian, which are of great value, contain it. And so do all other MSS. and versions. And to discredit it, simply and only because it does not appear in that one single Codex of Alexandria, is most unreasonable and unjust to the weight of authority for its retention. Dr. Tregelles, on full examination, was firmly convinced of its right to a place in the text, before the Codex Sinaiticus appeared; and the presence of "us" in that MS ought to settle the question of its genuineness forever. The evidences from the context, also argue powerfully for a construction which necessarily embraces it, whether expressed or not. We regard it as indubitably genuine." [Seiss, J.A. (1901). *The Apocalypse: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ* with Revised Text (Eighth Edition, Vol. 1). New York: Charles C. Cook.]

"You may be asking—'what difference does it make, and why go to all the trouble that is listed above?' The answer is quite important: The King James reading of the text clearly teaches that church-age believers (represented by the 24 Elders in heaven) are singing a song about their own redemption, and since the 24 Elders are in heaven all during the Tribulation—the correct view of Bible prophecy as to the Rapture of the Church Age believers (Jew and Gentile) is that they are removed BEFORE the Tribulation begins! Our response is simple—PRAISE THE LORD!" [David Hocking, *The Book of Revelation: Understanding the Future* (Tustin, CA: Hope For Today Publications, 2014), 276-77.]

## (2) The Coming Kingdom (5:10)

10 You have made them *into* a kingdom and priests to our God, and they **will reign** upon the earth."

10 "You have made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

10 You made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will reign on the earth."

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

- While the NASB and other good translations are in the third person, the KJV/NKJV translate these verses in the first person

- "...us...we" [KJV] - see notes on v9

- "...will reign" - *basileuo*, the fact that believers will serve as reigning powers means that we will be the equivalent of kings

— This verse refers to people who will reign in the millennium...who could that be? Not angels, but His Church, those saved by His blood (Cf. 1:5b-6).

— Spelled out more specifically in 20:4 regarding the millennial kingdom and in 22:5 regarding the Eternal State, we will join with Christ in His continual reign following His Second Coming

— Rev 1:6 tells us that we are a kingdom of priests (our identity), and Rev 5:10 tells us that we are not reigning now, but rather will "will reign" (future) upon the earth

— Rev 5:10 completes the notion of a kingdom of priests, and answers the questions of *when* we will reign and *where* we will reign

— Our destiny as believers is to reign alongside Jesus Christ, over this earth. We don't reign because Jesus somehow needs our help...we reign because He shares His delegated authority with us and *allows* us to reign with Him.

— 1 Cor 6 helps us understand how we should act today as believers when we know that someday we will be judges of angels, and that we will rule and reign alongside of Christ

— This "reign" is fulfilled in 20:4-6

[OT reference: Ex 19:6; Is 61:6]

This passage narrows down the timing of the Bema Seat (1 Cor 3; 2 Cor 5) judgment to just after the Rapture, but prior to the opening of the seals (6:1) and before them being called Elders in 4:4. The sequence would be:

1. Rapture (4:1)
2. Bema Seat (4:1-4)
3. Song of the Redeemed (5:10)
4. Christ opens the 1st Seal (6:1)

In this chronology, the Bema Seat happens between the Rapture and the 1st Seal, which is the start of Daniel's 70th Week.

## 5 Kingdom Truths from Rev 5:10

1. There is relationship and a distinction between God's kingdom in heaven and the coming kingdom upon the earth. There is a heavenly throne room scene that anticipates a coming kingdom upon the earth. Jesus takes the scroll from the Father on His heavenly throne so that a "reign upon the earth" can occur. That there is a kingdom of the Father in heaven is clear. Rev 4:2 tells of "One sitting on the throne." Also, the word "throne" is found at least 17x in Rev 4-5. So there is a kingdom that exists in heaven. This is the universal kingdom of the Father as He rules over all. But this heavenly kingdom is not all there is to the kingdom program. It anticipates a kingdom that must be established "upon the earth." This is the kingdom of the Messiah, the Davidic kingdom predicted by Gabriel (Luke 1:31-33) and Jesus (Matt 19:28; 25:31).
2. The people Jesus purchased with His blood are said to be "a kingdom." Believers in Jesus are positionally related to the kingdom and form the nucleus of it (1:6). This shows a present relationship of the kingdom to the present, not in the form of a reign yet, but a growing group of followers who have believed in King Jesus and are qualified to enter His kingdom.
3. The saints of God are destined to reign with Christ. When Jesus reigns, the saints will also reign. This shows that Jesus will share His kingdom authority with His followers. In 2:26-27, Jesus promised His followers that they would share in His reign over the nations. This was motivation for those currently facing difficult times. Because Jesus has authority as "ruler of the kings of the earth," (1:5) the saints can know that they will reign with Him.
4. This kingdom reign is future—"they *will* reign." Rev 5:10 shows that the kingdom of Jesus is future. At the time of the heavenly throne room scene the kingdom reign of 5:10 had not started yet. But this reign will occur after the Second Coming of Jesus (in Rev 19) as described in 20:4. Thus, 5:10 and 20:4 are connected.

- Rev 5:10 - "they will reign upon the earth." (promise of reward)
- Rev 20:4 - "they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." (promise realized)

Rev 5:10 is the promise of a coming reign of the saints while 20:4 is the actualization of the kingdom reign. On the flip side, the condition of the saints before the return of Jesus is not that of reigning. It is persecution and trial (see Rev 2-3; 6-19). Yet these conditions will give way to a kingdom reign in the future.

5. This coming reign of the saints is "upon the earth." The "earth" (not heaven) is the realm of the saints' reign. This shows that the kingdom is based on earth and refutes the idea that Messiah's kingdom reign is from heaven. The idea of an earthly kingdom is an explicit doctrine in Scripture. The reign of the saints and Jesus must be in the realm of the original creation given to man in Gen 1-2. It is not the case that Adam was tasked with ruling the earth while the Messianic/Davidic rule of Jesus and the saints is in heaven. Jesus will succeed in the domain that Adam failed.

(ii) Angels & 24 Elders (5:11-12)

(a) Worshippers (5:11)

**11** Then I looked, and I heard **the** voices 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,

**11** Then 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,

**11** Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels, the living creatures, and the elders surrounding the throne. They numbered 10,000's times 10,000 and thousands times thousands.

**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;

- After the doxology of the 24 Elders (v9-10), the angels and living creatures now join in... [note that in this verse, the 24 Elders are a distinct group from the angels]

- "...the" [3x] - indicates three separate and distinct groups: angels, living creatures, 24 Elders

- "...many" - we don't know how many angels there are (of the 2/3 good angels), but the Bible calls angels "stars" (Job 38:7; Is 14:12; Rev 12:4,7)

— The purpose of this verse is to demonstrate the extremely high number of heavenly beings joining in praise and worship to the worthiness of the Lamb

[OT reference: Dan 7:10]

(b) Worship (5:12)

12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to **receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honor, glory, and blessing.**"

12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

12 They sang with a loud voice, "Worthy is the lamb who was slaughtered to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise!"

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

- Now the 24 Elders are joined by the innumerable angelic realm + the four living creatures, heaping additional praise and worship upon Jesus Christ

- "...receive" - *lambanō*, to take, to receive

— How/why would Jesus "receive" these attributes? Doesn't He already possess them?

— Yes. What is meant by "receive" here is: the song of the angels (v12) is in the third person, addressed to people who have a relationship with the Lamb so that they can respond in agreement.

— The meaning of "receive" is not that God has given Christ the seven capacities and powers in the list, but rather that Christ is worthy to receive adoration for these seven qualities that He already possesses.

— The Lamb is not only worthy to take the seven-sealed scroll and open its seals, but according to this verse He is also worthy to receive recognition for the set of qualities listed

— The fact that "and" separates each quality means that each of the seven features of the Lamb's worthiness should be reflected on separately

- "...power" - *dynamis*, refers to His omnipotent power

— He is not one who can dream and never realize, plan but never achieve. He is able (Matt 28:18; 1 Cor 1:24; Col 1:16-17; Heb 1:3; Mark 5:1-20,25-29,35-43).

- "...wealth" - *plouton*, not just spiritual wealth, but also unconditional wealth in all realms

— There is no claim on Him which He cannot satisfy, no promise He cannot carry out (2 Cor 8:9; Eph 3:8)

- "...wisdom" - *sophian*, demonstrates itself in the conscious and purposeful creation and government of the world, appointing limits and goals in the execution of His will and the moulding of destiny

— It establishes the rule of righteousness on earth and is the moral power pervading and effecting the progress of world history

— To believers, Christ is the wisdom of God (Cf. 1 Cor 1:24, 30

- "...might" - *ischyn*, strength is His possession whether He actively exerts it or not

- His strength can disarm the powers of evil and overthrow Satan (Ps 24:8; Matt 12:29; Luke 11:22)
- "...honor" - *timēn*, honor that is God's rightful possession; honor is due Him because of His sacrificial death (Heb 2:9; Cf. Phil 2:11)
- It is before Him whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord indeed (Phil 2:11; Ps 104:1; Ps 8:5; Cf. Heb 2:7,9)
- "...glory" - *doxa*, which is His alone (John 1:14; 2:11; 11:4,40; 17:5,24)
- "...blessing" - *eulogian*, that quality of Christ evoking man's thankful response for benefits received
- It is what makes Him worthy of the ascription of praise. It creates in the creature a willingness, unaccompanied by coercion, to return blessing for blessing conferred. A distinction between the actual offering of praise for blessings received and the acknowledgment of what He possesses in Himself, His intrinsic praiseworthiness.

(iii) Every created thing (5:13)

- (a) Worshippers (5:13a)
- (b) Worship (5:13b)

13 And I heard every created thing which is in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, or on the sea, and all the things in them, saying, "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb *be* the blessing, the honor, the glory, and the dominion forever and ever."

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 honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

13 I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and on the sea, and everything that is in them, saying, "To the one who sits on the throne and to the lamb *be* praise, honor, glory, and power forever and ever!"

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 honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

- After the doxology of the 24 Elders (v9-10) and the doxology of the 24 Elders + angelic realm + four living creatures (v11-12), now all of creation joins in...this whole group direct their praise and worship to both God the Father and the Lamb (Jesus)

- The entities that were investigated to find someone qualified to open the scroll, and were found insufficient, are now worshipping the Lord for His qualifications to open the scroll (v3)

(iv) 4 Living Creatures & 24 Elders (5:14)

- (a) 4 Living Creatures (5:14a)

(b) 24 Elders (5:14b)

14 And the four living creatures were saying, "**Amen.**" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

14 And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.

14 Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!", and the elders bowed down and worshipped.

**14** And the four beasts said, "Amen." And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

- "...Amen" - "it's going to happen"; "it's true"; "it's certain"

— Everything that the seven sealed scroll represents, as far as the liberation of planet earth, is going to happen

- In v4, the Elders were sitting; in v10,14 the Elders are on the ground in a posture of worship