

Revelation Notes Chapter 5

Introductory Note

This chapter is a continuation of chapter 4. In the preceding chapter, we were allowed to peak into the very throne room of God. Chapter 5 focuses upon the worship of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.

Verse 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.”

“The right hand” symbolizes the power of God, i.e., His Sovereignty.

“A book written within and on the backside...”

In ancient times papyrus or vellum was used to write on. Papyrus was less expensive than vellum. The book mentioned here would actually have been a scroll. The fact that it was written on “within and on the backside” most likely is indicative of its contents being complete.

This event appears to represent the undoing of the curse, i.e., the reversal of the curse on all creation. Paul spoke about how that nature itself travails waiting eagerly for its redemption.

Verse 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?”

“A strong angel...” John does not give us any more details. That the angels’ proclamation was comprehensive, i.e., it was heard all over heaven, the earth and under the earth, is noteworthy.

“Who is worthy” means: Who has the authority to open the scroll?

Verse 3

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

No one could be found who had the authority to open the scroll and its seven seals.

Verse 4

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

John was greatly distraught. He was smitten with great grief and sorrow. Why? If no one had the authority to open the scroll then the promises of 4:1 could not be fulfilled not could the coming events unfold. The curse would remain in force. But John’s weeping was premature.

Verse 5

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

John is told to stop weeping by one of the elders. The elder is not identified. The message was good news for John, however.

“Behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David...”

This was definitely a messianic title assigned to Jesus Christ. See Gen. 49:9-10; Isa. 11:1, 10; Jer. 23:5; 33:5.

Verse 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.”

“I beheld...in the midst of the throne...the four beasts...of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...”

One would naturally expect an image of a ferocious lion but instead John sees a Lamb in the midst of the throne, a Lamb that had been slain. **Exodus 12:3-6** gave instructions for the Jewish people to keep a little lamb in their house four days before it was to be used as an offering.

This clearly depicts the Suffering-Messiah of **Isaiah 53**. Israel had expected a warrior-Messiah, one that would crush Rome and make them the ruling power of the world. Instead, Jesus came as a Suffering-Messiah. He indeed conquered the enemy but on the most important plane, the spiritual plane.

It is important to note that this lamb was standing. Again, a seemingly stark contradiction, but The Christ, had risen from the grave and ascended to the Father. Undoubtedly, his scars were visible to John.

This may seem to be an oxymoron. How could the Lion of Judah conquer by being the Lamb that was slain? Yet, this is exactly what Jesus did. All of this imagery points to the Suffering of Jesus Christ. He alone was worthy and had the authority to break the seals of God's book of coming judgments.

“Having seven horns and seven eyes...”

In Scripture, horns symbolize power and strength.

This represents that Jesus has complete power and knowledge. He is omnipotent and omniscient.

Verse 7

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

“He took the book...”

The Greek word for “took” depicts a sense of dramatic action. Thus, he swiftly took action. The One sitting on the throne had given Jesus this authority.

MacArthur notes: “The ultimate goal of redemption is about to be seen; paradise will be regained, Eden restored.

Cf. Daniel 7:13-14

Verse 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 the saints.”

The response of Jesus taking the scroll was one of worship. The four living creatures (beings) and the 24 elders fell down, i.e., they prostrated themselves before the Lamb.

All the heavenly hosts, the saved of the ages, all begin to break out in an ascending crescendo of praise! At last, Jesus will set up His millennial kingdom, to which there shall be no end.

This signified the Deity of Jesus Christ, i.e., that He was equally Divine, Equally God. Just as the elders had fallen down in worship of the One on the Throne in chapter 4, they did when Jesus took the scroll.

“And golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints.”

Bowls full of incense are used here to represent the prayers of the saints. These are the petitions of the saints for God’s judgment upon those who martyred his children (Cf. 6:10). But it may also involve the prayer for redemption.

Verse 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.”

Who is singing and playing? It would appear that only the elders, since angelic beings cannot experience redemption.

People from all nations will be in heaven. God’s redemption is made available to all peoples.

Verse 10

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

Cf. 1:6

This means that we will have full and complete access to God. We will reign with Christ during his millennial reign on earth. See 20:6; 2 Tim. 2:12.

Verse 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;”

The heavenly hosts are innumerable. The symbolism here depicts that all of heaven will acknowledge and sing praises to The Conquering Christ. The Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world is indeed worthy to receive honor and praise and glory.

Verse 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 blessings.”

Note that the angels’ song includes seven accolades. Jesus is worthy to receive:

1. Power, 2. Riches, 3. Wisdom, 4. Strength, 5. Honor, 6. Glory, and
7. Blessings.

Verse 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 forever and ever.”

Here the praise goes back to include “him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.”

Note that every living creature, which is in heaven, on the earth and under the earth, and in the sea, will give glory to God and His Christ. **Cf. Psalms 69:34**

Verse 14

“And the four beasts said; Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever.”

The four living creatures (beings) say Amen, which means: “let it be or so be it.”

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