

Living Word Fellowship Church

An Expository Explanation of Revelation Chapter 5

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Part II

A. General Description:

All of chapter 4 is an introduction to the main point of chapters 4-5, that is, to introduce the scroll with its seven seals. The symbolic presentation showed a scroll or a rolled-up parchment with seven seals affixed to the side in such a way that if unrolled the seven seals would need to be broken one by one. (From Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)

With the heavenly vision of chapters 4-5, the stage was set for the dramatic events to follow, the opening of the seven seals. It is clear from this revelation that heaven is real, not imagined. These two chapters reveal the indescribable glory and infinite majesty of the Godhead in heaven. The following chapters reveal this sovereign power of God expressed in judgment on a wicked world sunk in unprecedented depths of sin and blasphemy. (From Bible Knowledge Commentary/Old Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries; Bible Knowledge Commentary/New Testament Copyright © 1983, 2000 Cook Communications Ministries. All rights reserved.)

B. Key Words and Apocalyptic Definitions:

1. Right hand (vs. 1) – This is a place that defines purpose, high ranking, and equal power and dignity.
 - a) As in 4 we have the vision of Him that sitteth on the throne, to whom the world and all that is therein owe their being, in v. 6 we have the vision of the Lamb into whose hands the destinies of the world and all that is therein are committed. By His victory once and for all (ἐνίκησεν, 5:5, and ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, 5:6) He has shown Himself equal to this task, for whose achievement no one else could be found. Thus, as in 4, God the Creator is the center of worship, in 5 it is God the Redeemer, who thereby carries God’s purposes into fulfillment, while the chapter closes in the joint adoration of Him that sitteth on the throne and of the Lamb.¹
2. A book (vs. 1):
 - a) But when the book’s contents are revealed in the following chapters, they have to do not merely with events surrounding the elect but also, and especially, with judgments on unbelievers. This emphasis of the book in Revelation 5 is also apparent from the fact that the parallel “little book” in chap. 10 mainly contains events of judgment, which are followed by a narration of events of salvation.²
 - b) *A book containing God’s plan of judgment and redemption.* The “book” is best understood as containing God’s plan of judgment and redemption, which has been set in motion by Christ’s death

¹ Charles, R. H. (1920). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Revelation of St John*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 134–135). T&T Clark International.

² Beale, G. K. (1999). [*The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text*](#) (pp. 339–340). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

and resurrection but has yet to be completed. The question asked by the angelic spokesman concerns who in the created order has sovereign authority over this plan. That the book represents authority in executing the divine plan of judgment and redemption is clear from the parallelism of the hymns in 5:9–10 and 5:12.³

3. Writing on the back:

- a) The *writing on the back* implies fullness and completeness, so that nothing more needs to be added (Rev 22:18).⁴
- b) However, no portion of the roll is said to be *unfolded* and *read*; but simply the *seals* are successively *opened*, giving final access to its contents being read as a perfect whole, which shall not be until the events symbolized by the seals shall have been past, Thus, the opening of the seals will mean the successive steps by which God in Christ clears the way for the final opening and reading of the book at the visible setting up of the kingdom of Christ. Compare, at the grand consummation, Rev 20:12, “Another book was opened ... the book of life”; Rev 22:19.⁵

4. Seven seals:

- a) The symbolic presentation showed a scroll or a rolled-up parchment with seven seals affixed to the side in such a way that if unrolled the seven seals would need to be broken one by one.⁶
- b) The Greek word rendered “scroll” is *biblion*, from which is derived the word “Bible.”⁷
- c) sealed ... seven seals—*Greek*, “sealed up,” or “firmly sealed.” The number *seven* (divided into four, the world-wide number, and three, the divine) abounds in Revelation and expresses *completeness*. Thus, the *seven seals*, representing all power given to the Lamb; the *seven trumpets*, by which the world kingdoms are shaken and overthrown, and the Lamb’s kingdom ushered in; and the *seven vials*, by which the beast’s kingdom is destroyed.⁸

5. “the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David...”:

- a) Lion and the Lamb surely refer to Christ, with the Lamb referring to His first coming and His death and the Lion referring to His second coming and His sovereign judgment of the world. This is the only place in Revelation where Christ is called a Lion, whereas the word “Lamb” (*arnion*, “a small or young lamb”) is found 27 times in Revelation and nowhere else in the New Testament. But two similar words for a sacrificial lamb are used in the New Testament: *arēn*, found only in Luke 10:3, and *amnos*, which occurs four times (John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Peter 1:19).⁹

³ Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 340). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

⁴ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, pp. 565–566). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

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⁶ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 945). Victor Books.

⁷ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 945). Victor Books.

⁸ Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 566). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁹ Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 945). Victor Books.

- b) The “book” in chap. 5 should be understood as a covenantal promise of an inheritance when seen in the light of the above two identifications of the “book” and of the broader theological context of the Apocalypse concerning paradise lost and regained (cf. 2:7; 3:12; 22:1–5; see also on 12:14–17; 13:3).¹⁰
- c) Nevertheless, Christ was found worthy because He suffered the final judgment as an innocent sacrificial victim on behalf of His people, whom He represented and consequently redeemed (5:9). No doubt He was also considered worthy because He overcame the final judgment imposed on Him by redeeming a people and by being raised from death (cf. 5:5–6). Therefore, Christ was able to inherit the promises of the book (i.e., “open the book”), as do all those who are represented by Him (5:10 shows that they also participate in His kingdom and priesthood; cf. 1:5–6).¹¹
6. “Seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God....”:
- a) Since horns symbolize strength (1 Kings 22:11), the “seven horns” represent the authority and strength of a ruler (Dan. 7:24; Rev. 13:1). The “seven eyes” defined as the seven spirits of God (cf. Zech. 3:9; 4:10) symbolizes the Holy Spirit (cf. Rev. 1:4, 4:5). Because He alone is worthy, the Lamb took the scroll from the right hand of Him who sat on the throne (cf. Dan. 7:9, 13–14).¹²
- b) Seven horns (Luke 1:69) The perfect number *seven* represents that all power is given unto Him in Heaven and earth, Matt. 28:18.¹³
- c) And seven eyes, *etc.*, which eyes represent the watchful, active operation of God’s Spirit poured forth through the death and by the victory of the Lamb, upon all flesh and all creation.¹⁴
- d) The weight of the whole sentence lies in the predicative anarthrous participle, ἀπεσταλμένα. As the *seven burning lamps* before the Throne represented the Spirit of God immanent in the Godhead, so the *seven eyes* of the Lamb represent the same Spirit in His sevenfold perfection, profluent, so to speak, from the incarnate Redeemer; busied in His world-wide energy; the very word ἀπεσταλμένα reminding us of the *Apostolic* work and Church.” ALFORD.—E. R. C.]¹⁵
7. “Myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands”:
- a) It is generally recognized that the description “myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands” is taken from Dan. 7:10 (cf. also *1 En.* 40:1; 60:1; 71:8, which also alludes to Dan. 7:10; cf. further *1 En.* 14:22; Num. 10:36). That is such a clear picture from Dan. 7:10 should arise here is not surprising in the light of our preceding observations of Daniel 7, influenced in 5:2–10. The repeated mention of Ezekiel’s cherubim is now in v 11a combined with the scene in Dan. 7:10.¹⁶
- b) “Ten thousand” was the largest single number used in Greek, so “ten thousands of ten thousands” (myriads of myriads) is the author’s way of calling them innumerable. (From IVP Bible Background

¹⁰ Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (pp. 340–341). W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

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¹² Walvoord, J. F. (1985). *Revelation*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 945). Victor Books.

¹³ Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moore, E., Craven, E. R., & Woods, J. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Revelation* (p. 158). Logos Bible Software.

¹⁴ Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moore, E., Craven, E. R., & Woods, J. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Revelation* (p. 158). Logos Bible Software.

¹⁵ Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Moore, E., Craven, E. R., & Woods, J. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Revelation* (p. 158). Logos Bible Software.

¹⁶ Beale, G. K. (1999). *The book of Revelation: a commentary on the Greek text* (p. 364). Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle, Cumbria: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press.

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