

The Church of the Servant King

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PROPHECY SERIES

(Proph21E_Revelation_chp5_Throne Room of Heaven)

THE LAMB TAKES THE SCROLL

5:1 And 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. 2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" 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. 4 And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look into it; 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." 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. 7 And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.¹

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
1	"...a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals."	In the book of Daniel (Dan 12:1-4, 8, 9) we discover what a "sealed book" represents. Jesus Christ, through the Apostle John, reveals to us more of the details of what is contained in that "sealed book." (See analysis of these verses below).
2	"...a strong angel..."Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?"	<p>Since the "Tree of Life" was barred from man's continued access at the time man fell in the Garden (Gen 3:24), mankind has remained outside with no access to the throne room of God. (This "Tree of Life" is associated with the throne room of God the Father and the Lamb in 22:1-2). Man forfeited his dominion over the earth at the Fall and lost access to the Tree of Life.</p> <p>The question is asked – "Who is worthy?" Who is worthy to redeem (pay the price to obtain) this lost dominion? Satan now has dominion over this earth and its inhabitants who are separated from a righteous God by both an inherited sin nature and personally committed sins. Satan is the "god" and "prince" of this cosmos (Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2). As such, only he (Satan) could tempt the One (Jesus) who could redeem it in the only lawful way in which it could be redeemed (Lev 25:25; Deut 25:5; Ruth 4:1-6). This understanding of the question that is asked is bolstered by the song which is to follow which has a theme of the redemption of Creation.</p>
5	"...the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David..."	<p>There is no created being (angel or man) that could accomplish the work of the Redeemer. The Lion of Judah symbolizes His royal status as King – King of Israel (Gen 49:8-10; Num 24:7-9; Isa 9:6, 7; 11:1; Psa 89:20-29). This is the only place in Revelation where Jesus is referred to as a Lion.</p> <p>The "Root of David" is a reference to Isaiah 11:1 – "Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit." Isaiah 11:1 references the Messiah's human origins; however, Revelation 5:5 emphasizes the Messiah's pre-existence to David, i.e. His deity – "Root of David."</p>

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from *The Ryrie Study Bible, New American Standard Version* (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Bible Institute, 1976, 1978).

		<p>There was no “next-of-kin” or kinsman redeemer (e.g. illustrated by Boaz in the book of Ruth) to fallen man. Under Jewish Law, real estate that had been forfeited by a man could be redeemed by any near kinsman (Lev 25:25). To redeem the dominion over the earth, the redeemer must be a kinsman (thus a man) and must possess the purchase price of which only Jesus was capable (1 Pet 1:18-19).</p> <p>One of the elders <i>verbally</i> identifies the Redeemer in verse 5. Only He Who was the “Root” from which David came and the “offspring” which sprang from David, could be next-of-kin; therefore, it is He who is qualified to redeem the forfeited inheritance of access to the Throne, the Land, and the People.</p> <p>By assuming humanity, albeit untainted by sin, Jesus entered into the cosmos in which man dwelt – outside the garden and outside the tree of life (Gen 3:24). When John is given a <i>visual</i> of the throne room, He sees the Redeemer Lamb enter – thus, representing man’s access to the Throne Room and the Tree of Life (see v. 6).</p>
5	“...has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.”	<p>The book is symbolic of knowledge possessed by God regarding the “end time” of the Age of Israel (i.e. the Tribulation, the 2nd Advent and the establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth) which God has chosen to reveal only in part to select men (e.g. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John). Each of the seals have meaning and we shall see the meaning of the seven seals in chapter 6.</p>
6	“And I saw between the throne...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.”	<p>The Lamb has always been a picture of Jesus’ sacrificial death that satisfied the righteousness of God (i.e. propitiation). The coming of the King and His rule is preceded by His having obtained the right to rule through payment of the redemption price – “as if slain.” Past payment is the basis of future power (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14-15 cf. Jn 1:29).</p> <p>The “horns” of the Lamb are references to His power (see 1 Sam 2:1; 2 Sam 22:3; Psa 75:4; 132:17; 148:14; Lam 2:3; Ezek 29:21; Dan 8:5, 20, 21 where the “horn” represents power). Seven is the number of perfection, thus “seven horns” is symbolic of omnipotence.</p> <p>The “seven eyes” refers to perfect, divine omniscience, thus indicating that the Lord is a perfect judge (Zech 3:9; 4:10 allude to this fact).</p>
7	“And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.”	<p><u>“And He [the Lamb, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David – the Messiah-Redeemer, Jesus Christ] came, and He [Jesus Christ] took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne [God the Father].”</u></p>

Analysis of Daniel 12:1-4, 8, 9

12:1 “Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. 3 “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever. 4 “But as for

you, Daniel, **conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time;** many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase.” [Emphasis is mine].

8 As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, “My Lord, what will be the outcome of these events?” 9 And he said, “Go your way, Daniel, for **these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.**” [Emphasis is mine]

In Daniel 12:1-3, we read of the Great Tribulation, which is the central subject of the book of Revelation. Daniel is only permitted to make known the fact of the Tribulation out of which, Daniel’s people, the Jews, are to be delivered. The particulars of the Tribulation period were not for Daniel to record. That is why in verse 4, Daniel is instructed to “**conceal these words and seal up the book until the end of time.**” (I believe that the phrase “the end of time” in this passage is a reference to the end of the age, i.e. the time of the end of the age of Israel – see v. 9).

When Daniel inquires in verse 8 regarding the outcome of these events, he is again informed in verse 9 that “**these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.**” (Note the phrase “end time” – interpreted to be a reference to the end of the age or dispensation). It is interesting also that when the eleven remaining Apostles to Israel inquired of the resurrected, but not yet ascended Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 1:6 – “Lord, is it as this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” – Jesus replied in Acts 1:7 – “It is not for you to know the times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.”

The book of Revelation addresses the “time of the end” and is God’s disclosure to man of more details of that period. As such, the *unsealing* of the book that has been sealed and that contains the details of the Tribulation period is symbolic. Even though God provides more details of what is contained in this symbolic, sealed book through John, there remain some details that even John is commanded to not disclose. See Revelation 10:4 – “And when the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, ‘**Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken, and do not write them.**”

We take it therefore that the opening of the seals of this book is the enlargement, development and continuation of the Book of Daniel, describing, from God’s side, the judgments necessary to secure the fulfillment of all that he has foretold. The opening of each seal has a special judgment as its immediate result. The roll given to Ezekiel was so similar import. “He spread it before me, and it was written within and without; and there were written therein, lamentations and mourning and woe” (Ezek. ii.10). In like manner, the opening of the seals of this book disclose tribulation and mourning and woe. But there is more in the “Book” than this. There is also the *object* of all this judgment. That object is the redemption of the forfeited inheritance.²

WORTHY IS THE LAMB

8 And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying,

² E.W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 1984), 233. Bullinger’s last sentence in this quote is particularly agreeable to me. While there are certainly “judgments” that are referenced in Revelation, the real focus of the book is the assurance it provides that an all-powerful, all-knowing, sovereign God will accomplish His promised redemption of both man and nature from the attempts of Satan to thwart God’s purpose in human history. We’ll see this theme develop in greater detail as we progress through the study.

“Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 “And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.”

11 And 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,

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.”

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

Verse	Phrase	Explanation
8	“...having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”	<p>In Scripture, the harp is associated with joy, gladness and celebration (1 Chron 25:1, 6; 2 Chron 29:25; Psa 71:22; 92:3; 149:3) and sadness is associated with its absence (Isa 24:8). Harps are also associated with prophecy (1 Sam 10:5; 1 Chron 25:3; Psa 49:4).</p> <p>The golden bowls are symbolic containers for the prayers of the Tribulation believers. Incense was offered in the Israelite Tabernacle and Temple on the altar of incense (Exod 30:1-10; Num 7:84-86; 16:7, 17-18 cf. Zech 14:20).</p> <p>The “prayers of the saints” are the prayers of persecuted and afflicted Tribulation era believers. Jesus referred to this period of time and the prayers of believers living during the Tribulation in the parable of the persistent widow (Lu 18:6-8). The believers of this period are also referred to in Mathew 24:31 (cf. Dan 7:18, 22, 27). The faith that is characteristic of these believers is mentioned in Revelation 2:19; 13:10; and 14:12.</p> <p>Note that it is the 24 elders who perform the priestly service of offering or presenting the prayers of the Tribulation saints to God.</p>
9	“And they sang a new song...”	<p>We observe the four Zoa (“living ones”) speaking in this first vision of heaven (chps. 4-5) and in the last vision of heaven (19:4). The twenty-four elders speak in these two visions as well, but also a third time (11:17). The combined theme of the three speaking occasions provide us with the emphasis and theme of the book of Revelation – God’s ultimate redemption of His creation from the dominion of Satan, the removal of the curse, the redemption of the purchased inheritance, the ejection of the great usurper. All of this is accomplished by the payment of the price of Redemption by the merits of the acceptable Lamb and the subsequent manifestation of the worthy Messiah’s power.</p>
9	“...Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”	<p>The Jewish-centric, theocratic nation of Israel had a heavy responsibility (Lu 12:48 – “...to whom much is given, from him much will be required...” cf. Rom 9:1-5) toward the Gentile world. God’s desire has always been that all members of the human race be saved – Jews and Gentiles. The purpose of the</p>

		intercalation (insertion into the calendar of history) of the present Gentile-centric dispensation is to fill up that which was lacking in terms of Israel's fulfillment of her responsibility during approximately 2100 years of history – a period during which a “called-out” people were to be God’s agent for disseminating the message of salvation. God’s use of the Jewish-centric, theocratic nation of Israel to save Gentiles will only be fully realized at the time of the Messiah’s 2 nd Advent and subsequent theocratic rule and reign from a throne in Jerusalem for 1000 years.
10	“And Thou hast made <u>them</u> to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and <u>they</u> will reign upon the earth	Some translations render this “kings and priests to our God” (see also 1:6). It is also important to note that the better Greek manuscripts lead to a translation that uses the 3 rd person (“them” and “they”) versus the 1 st person (“us”). This is critical for the interpretation of the book for it separates the singers from those who are Redeemed. The heavenly beings are not the beneficiaries of the Lamb’s sacrificial death, but they sing of the redemption that has been accomplished for others. Otherwise, much of the speculation that is too common regarding the association of these creatures as representative of the Body of Christ would have at least some basis in this passage.
12	“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”	The payment price is only one part of the work of redemption. If the price was paid and there was no power to eject the usurper, Satan and all the forces aligned with him, The stanza of the new song recorded in verse 12 highlights the right of the Lamb to receive the power to eject the usurper.
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...”	The whole of creation sings in praise of God the Father and the Redeemer Son for the promise of Deuteronomy 32:43 is to be accomplished – “Rejoice, O nations [Gentiles], with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance on His adversaries, and will atone for His land and His people” (cf. Rom 8:22).
13	“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”	When this day of redemption and restoration of God’s dominion on the earth has come and when the glory of the Lord once again shines forth from His Temple in Jerusalem, then the song of the Psalms will be sung (Psa 8; 67; 96; 150).