

## First Day in Heaven

Chapters four and five of the Book of the Revelation describe several scenes in Heaven. The scenes take place just after the Rapture. Keep in mind our title: John foretells of our first day in heaven be we “one of the dead in Christ” or “which are alive and remain.”

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and **the dead in Christ** shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we **which are alive and remain** shall be caught up together with them in the clouds and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Let's first review what John teaches in Chapter four

NIV

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."

Rev 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Rev 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.

Rev 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

Rev 4:6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Rev 4:9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever,

Rev 4:10 the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

Rev 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

Now let's analyze verse one.

KJV

Rev 4:1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

**Expanded Translation:**

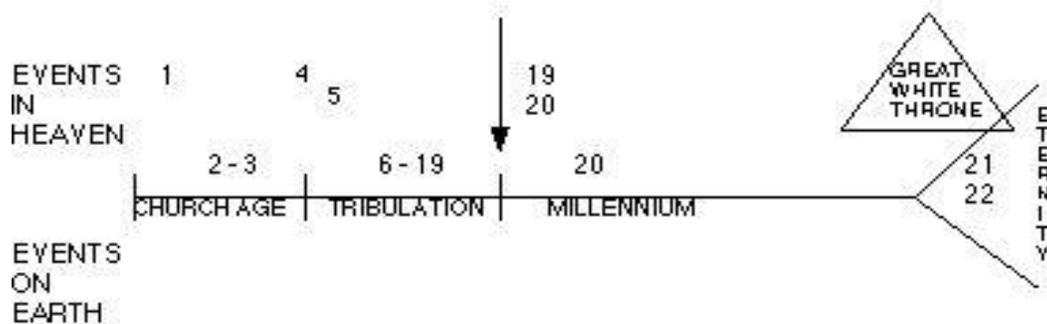
**Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw. What I saw was the door of the third heaven open. It was purposely left open; apparently this was done so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside. I then heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet the sound broke what was formerly a veil of silence. I was suddenly engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, “Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after the Rapture of the Church.”**

Following the divinely inspired outline of Rev 1:19, chapter four begins what John sees as taking place in heaven. Keep in mind the Church Age saints have been raptured and are in heaven.

Rev 1:19 Write the things which thou hast seen (chapter one), and the things which are (chapters two and three), and the things which shall be hereafter (chapters six-twenty-two);

It is here we begin the promise of "the things which shall be hereafter." This section is in contrast to what John saw in chapter one where he saw, a vision of the glorified Christ; it is also in contrast, to that found in chapters 2 and 3, where we saw the messages to the seven churches.

**AN OVERVIEW OF REVELATION**



Revelation chapters 6-20 requires one additional piece of information. Chapters 6-11 describe the Tribulation and Second Advent with emphasis on “the events.” Chapters 12-20 describe the Tribulation and Second Advent with emphasis on “the characters.”

Beginning in chapter four things to come are unfolded - "The things which shall be thereafter." The things seen in Revelation chapter four are post Rapture events. The reference to heaven is not to the atmospheric heavens-the aerial, nor to the starry heavens-the sidereal but to that which is beyond the natural eye which the best of telescopes cannot reveal. This is the third heaven- the residence of God.

John also hears a voice described as "the first voice which I heard," a reference to the same voice he heard in Rev 1:10 and following.

It was not the sound of a trumpet but a voice "like a trumpet." It was a voice communicated a message and not just a sound. The command in chapter four is an announcement of the purpose of God to show those things which will "be hereafter" or better translated "that which will be after these things." The implication is that the prophecies now to be unfolded will occur after the events of the present age—the Church Age.

John was not actually translated. In fact he was still in his natural body on the island of Patmos. He was translated into scenes of heaven only temporarily. He is obviously not a raptured saint. John will be one of the dead in Christ who shall rise first. John is witnessing that which will happen hopefully in our generation. The Book of the Revelation does not primarily deal with God's program for the church. Instead the primary objective is to portray the events leading up to and climaxing in the second coming of Christ, the prophetic kingdom and the eternal state which ultimately will follow. From a practical standpoint, however, the Rapture may be viewed as having already occurred in the scheme of God's plan before the events of chapter four and following.

The word church, so prominent in chapters two and three, does not occur again until Rev 19:7 as the wife of the Lamb and again in Rev 22:16 as the recipient of a message from an angel of God.

The Church is not a participant in the scenes of the Tribulation which form the major content of the book of Revelation. The familiar phrase "what the Spirit saith unto the churches" found in Rev 2:7, 11, 17 and 29; 3:6, 13 and 22 is significantly and conspicuously absent. Why? Because the Church is in heaven after the messages to the churches on earth in Revelation chapters two and three.

It seems that the church as the Body of Christ is out of the picture, and saints who come to know the Lord in this period are described as saved Israelites or saved Gentiles, never by terms which are characteristic of the church. At the beginning of chapter 4 through chapter 18 the church is always seen in heaven. The church is not related to the events which take place on the earth in preparation for Christ's return in power and glory; only at the return of the Lord Jesus at His Second Advent is the church mentioned on earth and then only as the Bride of Christ being transported from heaven to the New Jerusalem and the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

Let's look at a few points related to the Marriage, the Wedding Supper and several events related thereto: The body of Christ is now being formed on earth and its formation will continue until the Rapture.

When the body is complete the Rapture will occur if not immediately, soon thereafter. At the Rapture the Bride gets her resurrection body and at the Bema the Bride is cleansed of all her human good. The Bride is also adorned in white and thus prepared for the marriage to the Lamb. The Bride returns with Christ at the Second Advent. 1Th 3:13

Operation footstool also occurs at about this time in which there is a parade of demons who are led to divine judgment. (Col 2:14-15)

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Col 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

After the angelic judgment follows the coronation of the Groom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev 19:1 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God.

The Wedding Supper of the Lamb is described in Rev 19:7-8; the marriage apparently is held in heaven and the Wedding Supper takes place on earth just after the Second Advent.

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

Rev 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)

Before moving forward in our study let me again give you an expanded translation of verse one of chapter four:

#### **Expanded Translation:**

**Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw; a door in the third heaven was opened and purposefully left open. Apparently this was done so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside. I then heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet, the sound broke what was formerly a veil of silence; and I was suddenly engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, "Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after these things."**

Now let's see what we can gather from Rev 4:2 and 3.

NIV

Rev 4:2 At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.

Rev 4:3 And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and sardius. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne.

John finds himself in heaven "in the spirit" much the same way as in Rev 1:10.

Though actually on the Isle of Patmos in chapter four John is experiencing the presence of God and seeing a series of glorious visions. The first object which appears to his startled eyes is a throne in heaven with one sitting upon it. The primary impression received by John is that of color, and he describes the presence of the One on the throne "like a jasper and a sardius stone." The sight of a rainbow around the throne like an emerald further enriches the color scheme.

This verse is first a general expression of the glory of God. The details furnished, however, though not explained by John, undoubtedly have deep significance. The throne in heaven is a reminder of the sovereignty of God who is far removed from the petty struggles of earthly government. Here is the true picture of the universe as being subject to the dominion of a sovereign and omnipotent God. The precious stones mentioned also have meaning. It is very difficult to specifically identify each of these stones in terms of modern gemology. These stones had a relationship to the tribes of Israel. Each tribe of Israel had a representative stone, and the high priest had stones representing each of the twelve tribes of Israel on his breast plate.



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He used the Ephod/Breastplate in his priestly duties before the altar.

This symbolized the fact that he as the high priest was representing all twelve tribes before the throne of God.

Significantly the sardius and the jasper stone are the first and last of these twelve stones. In Exo 28:17-21 the sardius represented Reuben the firstborn of Jacob. The jasper stone represented Benjamin the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob.

In other words the two stones represented the first and the last and therefore may be regarded as including all the other stones in between, i.e. all Israel. The emerald as we have seen in verse eighteen of Exodus chapter twenty-eight is the stone of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob, and the tribe from which Christ came. This too helps in the identification of the throne being bathed in the light of Christ Who sits victoriously with the Father. It is evident that the glory of God was the intent of the vision rather than an anthropomorphic representation.

Before moving forward let me give you an expanded translation of verses two and three of Revelation chapter four:

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 4:2 Immediately I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right there in the middle of the Third Heaven. And there was One seated on the throne.**

**Rev 4:3 And He who was seated was in appearance like a jasper stone [Benjamin's] and a sardius [Reuben's]. And encircling the throne there was a ring of light which was like an emerald [Judah's] in appearance.**

Now let's see what we can learn from verse four:

NIV

Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns (**Stephanos**) of gold on their heads.

Principles:

In addition to the glory of the throne and the One (the Father) who sat upon it, John's attention is next directed to twenty-four thrones upon which the twenty-four elders are seated. The term "seats" is properly "thrones."

The elders are in a situation of repose, sitting on their thrones clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. Considerable discussion has arisen concerning the identity of these twenty-four elders. Some have thought they are angels, others Israel and still others Church Age saints." The latter being my view.

That they represent a group seems clear. From parallel Old Testament passages the priesthood was represented by twenty-four orders of priests. There were actually thousands of priests in Israel's day of ascendancy under David and Solomon, but they all could not minister at the same time.

Accordingly, they were divided into twenty-four orders. When these priests met together, even though there were only twenty-four, they represented the whole priesthood and at the same time the whole of the nation.

In a similar way the twenty-four elders mentioned in the book of the Revelation may be regarded as representative, but of what? The text itself does not give a specific statement concerning the identity of these elders. Some help however, is afforded in the description given. The elders are described as being clothed in white raiment and having on their heads crowns of gold. There are two kinds of crowns in the book of the Revelation involving two different Greek words. One is the crown of a ruler or a sovereign (**Diadem**), which is a crown of governmental authority. The other is the crown of a victor (**Stephanos**), such as was awarded in the Greek games when a person won a race or some contest. This crown was usually made of leaves, therefore as we have noted, it is better translated a “wreath.”

The word here is the crown of a victor rather than that of a sovereign. It is significant that the passage states the twenty-four elders already have their crowns of gold as victors. It would seem the crowns were theirs having been tried by fire at the **Bema**. This passage takes place before the Tribulation. The heavenly scene occurs (just) after the removal of the Church from the earth and thus after the **Bema**. For this same reason the elders do not seem to be a proper representation of Israel, for Israel's judgment like that of the angels comes at the end of the tribulation, and not before.

The only explanation that fits is that of the church where according to 1Co 3:11-15 every man's work is judged to see if it will survive the fiery testing of the **Bema**.

Only the church which has by now been raptured would seem to fit. Given they are sitting with Christ on thrones, they have their white uniforms of glory and they have their crowns of victory therefore for me it is settled; these are Church Age saints, the 24 being representative of a unit.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 4:4 And encircling the throne there were twenty-four thrones, and upon the twenty-four thrones, were twenty-four elders. They sat as rulers, clothed in white garments, and upon their heads sat several golden crowns. The elders represented the Church Age saints earlier raptured.**

Now let's take a look at Revelation chapter four verse five:

NIV

Rev 4:5 From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God.

The all inspiring scene described by John in this verse is in keeping with the majesty of the throne and the dignity of the twenty-four elders. The lightnings, thunderings, and voices which proceed from the throne are prophetic of the righteous judgment of God upon a sinful and chaotic world. They are similar to the thunder, lightning, and voice of the trumpet which mark the giving of the law in Exodus 19:16 and are a fittingly preliminary to the awful judgments which are to follow in the great tribulation when God deals with the earth in righteousness judgment.

John's attention is also directed to seven lamps of fire which are seen burning before the throne. These are identified as "the seven Spirits of God" mentioned earlier in Rev 1:4 and as earlier defined by Isaiah. As we noted in our study of Rev 1:4 these are best understood as representing the Holy Spirit in a seven fold way rather than seven individual spirits as some have asserted.

The Holy Spirit is not humanly visible unless embodied in some way. When the Holy Spirit descended on Christ on the occasion of His baptism, the people saw something like as a dove descending. If it had not been for the "dove", they could not have seen the Holy Spirit. In a similar way on the day of Pentecost, the coming of the Spirit would not have been visible if it had not been for the "cloven tongues like as of fire."(Acts 2:3-4)

The seven lamps of fire therefore are the means by which John is informed of the presence of the Holy Spirit. The number seven is characteristic of the perfection of the Spirit and is in keeping with Isa 11:2-3.

- the spirit of the Lord
- the spirit of wisdom
- the spirit of understanding
- the spirit of counsel
- the spirit of might
- the spirit of knowledge
- the spirit of fear

In the heavenly scene it may be concluded that all three Persons of the Trinity are in evidence, each in a particular form of revelation. As we have seen the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit sit on the throne in the Heavenly Temple. The Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son are seen but interestingly there is no veil, no Holy Place, just a Throne Room setting in a heavenly Temple. With the revealed Trinity there is no need for any training aids such as a golden lampstand, table of showbread, altar of incense, golden laver, altar for the sacrificing of animals, altar to house: the vase of manna, rod that budded, tablets of the law or covering angels—just a Heavenly Temple where the Father, Son and Holy Spirit reside with myriad angels and raptured saints, who worship at their feet. What a difference from the earthly Tabernacle and Temple used by Israel as training aids.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 4:5 And out from the throne proceeded lightnings and voices and thunders; a picture of the power and sovereignty of God. There were seven blazing torches burning before the throne; these are the seven Spirits of God, a representation of the presence of God the Holy Spirit.**

Now let's take a look at Revelation verses six, seven and eight:

NIV

Rev 4:6 Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle.

Rev 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Occupying, an important part of the scene before John is a sea of glass described as "like unto crystal," and in the background are four living creatures. Apart from indicating that the sea of glass is like crystal, John gives us no explanation of the meaning of this sea. As in other portions of the book of the Revelation, however, John expects the reader to draw conclusions from similar scenes or concepts found elsewhere in the Bible; or in the light of the context. The context here would seem to carry the day. From verse five where there is thunder and lightning, we find a metaphor for the power and sovereignty of God. In verse six we move to a peaceful setting, a sea of glass, clear as crystal. This would seem to indicate the divine efficacious outcome of God; there is peace and stability in heaven because God has won out over the chaos and turmoil of the activities of Satan and his minions on planet earth. God gives us a preview of this in numerous Scriptures, not the least of which is Psa 2:1-9:

John, however, is not occupied at this point with the sea of glass, but rather with the four living creatures described in the midst of the throne and round about the throne. He records that they are full of eyes before and behind, and each of them has six wings. Further, each of the four beasts are distinguished from the other. They are described respectively as like a lion, a calf, a man, and a flying eagle. Their ministry before the throne of God is that of ceaselessly ascribing holiness to the Lord. The translation "beasts" in the KJV is quite inaccurate and thus changed in the NIV to "living ones." In the Greek the word used is **Zoon**, which means "living ones."

There has been much speculation concerning the identity of these living ones and the significance of their presence and ministry in this heavenly scene. As Alford states, "In inquiring after their symbolic import, we are met by the most remarkable diversity of interpretations." Over the centuries, these winged figures became associated with the four Gospel writers. From the fourth century A.D., they were commonly used in illustrated manuscripts and in mosaics and other elements of church architecture to represent Matthew (a man), Mark (a lion), Luke (an ox) and John an (eagle). There are those who believe the creatures represent the people of God. Those of this persuasion believe the lion, bull, human and eagle faces represent authority, strength, wisdom and swiftness, all valued things in creation. The best interpretation in my view is that the four living creatures are angels whose function it is to bring honor and glory to God

This would seem to be in keeping with Isaiah's six winged creatures of Isa 6:1-7. Additionally, angels are frequently seen in Scripture, especially in the apocalyptic books such as Ezekiel and the Revelation. The fact that the living creatures have six wings as do the seraphim of Isa 6:2-3 adds weight to the interpretation that they are angels. We know little about the seraphim except that they are elect angels and rank high in the angelic table of organization. The living creatures in Revelation four and the seraphim of Isaiah 6 have a similar function in that both ascribe holiness to the Lord of the armies (compare Isa. 6:3). The ministry of the living creatures is designed to emphasize the holiness of God and His eternal essence "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Their presence in the heavenly scene contributed much to the overall impression of the majesty, holiness, sovereignty, and eternity of God.

In keeping with this thought let me give you one plausible alternative, a hybrid of several of the postulations listed: The four angels might represent the four portraits of Christ that we find in the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

The "Lion," king of the beasts, pictures Christ as the King of the Jews. This is especially emphasized in the Gospel of Matthew. The hard-working Ox pictures Christ as the fully obedient servant of His Father. This quality is highlighted in the Gospel of Mark. The Living Being with the face of a man represents Christ as the ideal and perfect man, as vividly portrayed in the Gospel of Luke. The Flying Eagle suggests Christ's heavenly origin, i.e., His complete oneness with our Father God. This is the special message of the Gospel of John. It is my view the creatures are: "ministering angels who watched over God's beloved Son and His family" while he so wonderfully served as the Godman." Their continual song of praise, "Holy, holy, holy ...," is perhaps also to remind us night and day of the sublime nature and work of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was on earth.

Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 4:9-11.

KJV

Rev 4:9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Rev 4:10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

Rev 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Evidently whenever the four living beings begin to praise the Lord, it's the cue for the twenty-four elders to fall down before the throne and worship God. The elders throw their crowns at His feet.

I taught earlier that the crown which each elder wore was a victor's crown. Actually there are many crowns promised as rewards to faithful believers, and the victor's crown would seem to symbolize them all. It may be that a believer who has earned more than one crown will be given stars to attach to his victor's crown to designate how many crowns he has won.

It may be that the faithful elders, who are symbolic of all church age believers, will somehow be able to wear more than one crown at a time. Whatever the case, though the crowns of the elders have been honorably won, each elder realizes the source of his or her divine good was the Word of God - the Mind of Christ, accordingly out of gratitude and love the **Stephanoi** are cast at the Saviors feet. That the Bible is the mind of Christ is made clear in several passages:

1Co 2:16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that the Spirit might instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Phi 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

1Pe 4:1 Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.

That doctrine, in the soul of the believer produces, is also clear.

2Pe 1:8 For if doctrine abounds in you, you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful because of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ resident in your souls.

2Pe 1:9 But the believer who has neglected doctrine is virtually blind and has great difficulty seeing, soon this same nearsighted believer forgets that he was purged from his old sins.

2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2Ti 3:17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

In sincere gratitude the raptured saints are seen castingg their crowns in praise at the Father's feet! An act we will all do someday. Before we begin a study of chapter five I want to give you an expanded translation of Rev 4:9-11.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 4:9 And whenever the seraphim gave glory and honor and thanksgiving to the the Christ Who lives forever,**

**Rev 4:10 the church age believers represented by the 24 elders would fall down before the throne and cast their crowns before Him saying:**

**Rev 4:11 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and all for Your pleasure and purpose were they created.**

7. Now let's see what we can learn from Chapter Five, but first let me give you an expanded translation of Revelation chapter four.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 4:1 After the warnings announced to the church at Laodicea, I looked and seriously pondered what I saw. What I saw was the door of the third heaven open.**

**It was purposely left open; apparently this was done so I could hear and see what was transpiring inside. I then heard a voice, at first it sounded like a trumpet. The sound broke a veil of silence. I was suddenly engaged in a conversation with the eerie sounding trumpet, “Come up here at once, and I will show you the things which must take place after the Rapture of the Church.”**

**Rev 4:2 “Immediately, I found myself under the absolute control of the Holy Spirit. I was commanded to consider what I heard and saw. A throne had been placed right there in the middle of the Third Heaven. And there was a very special One seated on the throne.**

**Rev 4:3 The One seated was Father God Himself. Color was John’s first impression. The throne was bathed in a beautiful mixture of three colors emanating from three stones: the ruby red of the sardius (Reuben’s), the sparkling brilliance from a large diamond emanating from the jasper (Benjamin’s) and both stones were bathed in a background of green emanating from an emerald (Judah’s).**

**Rev 4:4 Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. The twenty-four elders represented the raptured saints. They were dressed in white representing their positional sanctification and they had crowns of gold on their heads representing the divine good tried at the Bema.**

**Rev 4:5 And out from the throne proceeded lightning and thunder; a picture of the power and sovereignty of the Father. There were seven blazing torches burning before the throne; these are the seven Spirits of God, representing the presence of God the Holy Spirit.**

**Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was as it were a glassy sea like crystal; a picture of peace and stability that only an omnipotent God can bring. And in the midst of the thrones and circling the throne were four angels full of eyes in front and in back.**

**Rev 4:7 The first angel was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third had a face like that of a man,**

**Rev 4:8 The fourth angel was like an eagle flying. And each of the angels had six wings, and even their wings were full of eyes. And they rested neither day nor night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, and there was special praise for the Christ Who was, Who is, and Who is coming.**

**Rev 4:9 And whenever the seraphim gave glory and honor and thanksgiving to the Christ Who lives forever,**

**Rev 4:10 the church age believers represented by the 24 elders would fall down before the throne and cast their crowns before Him saying:**

**Rev 4:11 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and all for Your pleasure and purpose were they created. "Worthy are You, O Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and power, because it was You who created all things; yes all things were created at Your pleasure.**

Now we begin chapter five.

The book of the Revelation speaks with unwavering assurance about about the magnificence residence for believers in Heaven. It also describes with authority the events that will scourge the earth for seven years after the Rapture. These seven years will be the most fateful in all human history. These years are "the countdown," leading to Satan's demise because at the termination of this period Jesus will return to earth in a cataclysmic personal appearance to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

During this seven year period known as "the Tribulation," the human race will witness the most terrible judgments ever to fall on God's creation. Chapters 6 through 19 of the Book of the Revelation describe in detail the unprecedented horrors of this time. This period is God's final countdown for mankind, culminating in the personal, visible return of Jesus Christ to this earth to reclaim it as His own possession. That found in the seven seals is the horror which only the Christ in the Father's time can and will release. Before any judgment lashes the earth, however, a portentous scene unfolds in heaven. This is described for us in Revelation Chapter Five. Chapter Five consists of 13 verses.

Chapter 5 of the book of the Revelation continues the vision of the throne of heaven given in the preceding chapter. John is now introduced to an item of central importance, namely, a book which contains the prophecy of impending events to be unfolded. The book is actually a scroll (Greek **Biblion**), which is given prominence in the scene by the fact that it is in the right hand of God who is on the throne. The importance and comprehensive character of the revelation contained in the scroll are indicated by the fact that the book is written on both sides of the parchment. Further, the document is made impressive by seven seals, apparently fixed on the edges of the scroll in such a way that the seals must be successively broken if the scroll is to be unrolled and read. That found in the scroll is God's judgment of earth.

John's attention is especially directed to this book by the pronouncement of a strong angel. The adjective "strong" (Greek **Ischuros**) means "mighty or powerful," and hence indicates that an important angel is selected for this pronouncement. J. B. Smith comments on the "strong angel" as follows: "The vision opens with three notes of emphasis; a strong angel only twice more is reference made to a strong angel in the book, see Rev 10:1 and 18:21." These two angels are facilitators of the wrath of God as we shall see. The angel proclaims not merely says, for you see the angel cries-out as a herald--with a loud voice. The Greek denotes urgency and great concern.

About 2,600 years ago, God revealed to the prophet Daniel many predictions about future world events, including the return of Christ to this earth to set up God's earthly Kingdom. Daniel was puzzled over the fantastic predictions, God told him to seal up all of his prophecies until the end of the age. (Daniel 12:4)

Dan 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people--everyone whose name is found written in the book--will be delivered.

Dan 12:2 Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt.

Dan 12:3 Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Dan 12:4 But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

During all the centuries since God spoke to Daniel, men have had varied interests concerning the events of that final period of man's history, i.e., that which is called the "end times." Prophecy has indeed attracted the curious.

John tells us in this chapter about one of the first events that will take place after the Rapture of the Church. It will be the unsealing of a scroll that reveals all the judgments which will descend on the world during its coming seven years of travail. John also describes the dramatic search for someone worthy to open the scroll and set in motion its dreadful forces. Sealing a scroll with seven seals was a common and an important practice in Biblical times. The wills of both Emperor Vespasian and Caesar 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 periodically stop, roll the parchment and seal the scroll seven times with wax. By the time he was finished, he would have sealed the scroll seven times. The scroll would be read a section at a time, after each seal was opened. Why then was this sealing process used? Evidently it was to prevent unauthorized persons from tampering with the scroll. Only a "worthy" person that is, someone with proper authority could have legal access to the scroll's message.

W. A. Criswell presents an explanation of the use of a sealed scroll in his *Expository Sermons on Revelation*.

"When a Jewish family was required to forfeit its land and possessions through some economic distress, the property could not be permanently taken away. Their losses were listed in a scroll and sealed seven times, then the conditions necessary to purchase back the land and possessions were written on the outside of the scroll. When a qualified redeemer could be found to meet the requirements of reclamation, the one to whom the property had been forfeited was obligated to return the possessions to the original owner. Since the major part of the Book of the Revelation deals with a seven sealed scroll and its mysterious contents, it's very important for us to understand the significance of the scrolls contents.

“Since the scroll represents the coming events of the Tribulation, after which Christ returns to take back His land and possessions earlier forfeited by Adam, it seems obvious the sealing has special meaning. When God created Adam and Eve, he gave them dominion over the earth and everything in it. Man was made the sovereign. However, when Adam turned his back on God, he became the Benedict Arnold of eternity and the universe. He officially forfeited to Satan his authority to rule the world. At that point the arch enemy of God legally took over dominion of earth. That Christ returns to reacquire that which is His is without question, but it needs to be pointed out that we too have a part in this "buying back" process even while living in time.”

The Book of the Revelation presents the Tribulation judgments in three distinct series. They are unfolded in chronological order in chapters 6 through 19 and each contains an unleashing of seven specific horrors, each getting progressively worse.

The first is depicted as four horsemen. The second series of wrath is signaled by the successive sounding of seven trumpets. The earth is devastated by these judgments.

The third series of punishments is unleashed by the pouring out of the seven bowls full of the wrath of God and these are the most severe of all.

Let’s begin our study with a review of an expanded translation of Rev 5:1-4.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 5:1 “And there sitting on the throne was God the Father and in His right hand was a scroll. There was writing on both sides of the scroll but the scroll itself was sealed by seven wax seals.**

**Rev 5:2 And I saw a large angel fly around the throne. The size and strength of the angel was impressive. He landed upon the Father's throne and shouted with a loud voice in an urgent tone, “who is worthy to open the scroll, who is able to break its seals?”**

**Rev 5:3 Sadly there was nothing but silence in heaven. There was no one found either in heaven or earth or under the earth who would even approach the scroll. There was neither angel nor man worthy enough to open the scroll.**

**Rev 5:4 I began to weep audibly, openly and profusely because no one was found worthy.**

John tells us in this chapter about one of the first events that will take place after the Rapture of the Church. It will be the unsealing of a scroll that reveals all the judgments which will descend on the world during its coming seven years of travail. John also describes the dramatic search for someone worthy to open the scroll and set in motion its dreadful forces. The angel raises the question "Who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof? John then records in verse three that no one in heaven, in earth, or under the earth was able to open the book.

The purpose of this dramatic presentation of the seven sealed book was to impress upon John the importance of its contents and of the revelation contained therein.

Before leaving verse four let's speak briefly to the weeping of John: "And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon ..." Earth rightly belongs to Adam's race, but as a result of our forefather's capitulation to Satan none of his descendants can qualify to pay the redemption price of the forfeited world. Someone must be found if humanity is to escape eternal loss. "Who is worthy to make restitution for man's deficiency?" As John looked at this great scroll and sensed its importance, he wept uncontrollably because no man could be found who was untainted with Adam's sin. No man or angel in the universe could claim the right to open this scroll. Could anyone be found to redeem man's lost heritage? Dr. Criswell eloquently describes John's quandary.

"John's tears represent the tears of all God's people ... They are the tears of Adam and Eve as they view the body of their dead son Abel and sense the awful consequence of their disobedience. They are the tears of the children of Israel held in bondage as they cried to God for deliverance from their affliction and slavery. They're the tears wrung from the heart and soul of God's people as they have stood beside the graves of loved ones and experience the indescribable heartaches and disappointments of life. Such is the curse that sin has laid upon God's beautiful creation. No wonder John wept so fervently; if no redeemer could be found to remove the curse, it meant that God's creation was forever consigned to remain in the hands of Satan."

In chapter five John will reveal the one Person who is qualified to pay the price of man's lost inheritance. It is the Godman, who would pay the debt by agreeing to come to planet earth, die the sinner's death and accept the judgement of all sin.

In the pages that follow we will see that a day is coming when the resurrected and glorified Christ will at His Second Advent punish those who have refused His salvation. It is at this time He will reclaim the earth as His own.

Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 5:5-7:

NIV

Rev 5:5 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.

Rev 5:6 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.

Rev 5:7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

As John weeps because no one is found worthy to open the book, one of the raptured saints tells him he should stop weeping, for there is one worthy to open the book, namely, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David." The allusion to "the Lion" is a reference to Genesis 49:9-10, where it is predicted that the future ruler of the earth shall come from the tribe of Judah, the lion tribe.

Gen 49:9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness--who dares to rouse him?

Gen 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations are his.

Wycliffe writes of this verse "Judah, Jacob's fourth son by Leah, received the first unqualified praise from the old patriarch. He carried the hope of Israel upon his person. Having neither birthright nor exceptional dignity nor spiritual powers, he would emerge as the powerful leader of a people who could enthusiastically admire and praise him ... He would be feared by his enemies, for as a lion he would pursue them relentlessly until victory was his. Then, having completed his mission, he would retire to his mountain fastness to rest in the security of a stronghold that none could take. He would grasp in his hand the ruler's staff that would symbolize his mastery in the roles of warrior, king, and judge."

The reference to Christ as the root of David stems from the prophecy of Isa 11:1 compared with Isa 11:10. The Scriptures seem to distinguish between opening the book (which would involve beginning the process of unrolling the scroll) and the complete authority to break all the seven seals successively. These verses make clear that Christ is completely worthy and has full authority and sovereignty in respect to the contents of the seven sealed book.

With this introduction John fixes his gaze upon one portrayed as a Lamb standing in the middle of both the throne and the four living creatures!

The Lamb is described as having been slain and then raised from the dead and possessing seven horns and seven eyes. This is a picture of our resurrected Lord fully possessing the power of both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit; for it is Christ who won the victory on the Cross.

As J. Vernon McGee contrasts the characteristics of the lion and the lamb, he writes "the lion character refers to His second coming, since the lion speaks of His majesty. As a lion He is sovereign; as a lion He is Judge." The lion also says J Vernon: "speaks of the government of God. The lamb character refers to His first coming for the lamb speaks of His meekness judged and judged for the sins of the world." 1Jo 2:2

The lamb also speaks of the grace of God. In the Book of the Revelation Christ is referred to as the Lion only once, (Rev 5:5) in contrast to many times where He is identified as the Lamb. The purpose of the use of the term "lamb" would seem to refer to the work of Christ; Christ the Lamb of sacrifice in His First Advent won the victor

The horns seem to speak of the prerogative of a king. Dan 7:20-27

Dan 7:20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell--the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

Dan 7:21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them,

Dan 7:22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

Dan 7:23 "He gave me this explanation: "The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it.

Dan 7:24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings.

Dan 7:25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for a time, times and half a time.

Dan 7:26 ""But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.

Dan 7:27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

The seven eyes are identified in Rev 5:6 as "in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having ... seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."

Rev 5:6 It was then that I saw a diminutive Lamb; the young Lamb looked as if it had been slain; the Lamb was in the center of the throne room surrounded by the four special angels and the church age saints.

The Lamb had seven horns representing His perfect kingdom which was purchased by His perfect work; the Lamb had seven eyes representing the Holy Spirit sent into the world to assist and glorify Him.

Though the seven eyes of Rev 5:6 may be a reference to seven angels, the preferable view is that it is a reference to the Holy Spirit in His special function as the sevenfold Spirit of God sent to be a precursor of our Lord and the One Who assisted in all that our Lord did. That the lampstand with its seven wicks, seven channels and a single bowl of oil kept always burning in the Holy Place would lend support to the position that the seven spirits of God is a metaphor for God the Holy Spirit sustaining, the Lord Jesus Christ. This because of the description in Zec 4:2 of what would seem to be the seven stemmed lampstand which always stands lighted in the Holy Place: "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lights on it" Zec 4:2

As the grand old preacher J. Vernon has said "As lamb He is Savior; as lamb He is judge." But Jesus would not have to do it alone; He was aided and abetted by "God the Holy Spirit sent forth by the Father into all the earth." Let me give you an expanded translation of Rev 5:1-6.

**Rev 5:1 And there sitting on the throne was God the Father and in His right hand was a scroll; there was writing on both sides of the scroll; the scroll itself was sealed by seven wax seals.**

**Rev 5:2 And I saw a large angel fly by landing near the throne; the size and strength of the angel was impressive.**

**He stood beside the Father's throne and shouted with a loud voice and in an urgent tone "who is worthy to open the scroll, who is able to break its seals?"**

**Rev 5:3 Sadly there was nothing but silence in heaven; there was found no one able either in heaven or earth or under the earth; there was no one with sufficient power; nor was there found either angel or man who would even approach to look at the scroll.**

**Rev 5:4 I began to weep audibly, openly and profusely because no one was found worthy.**

**Rev 5:5 And one of the church age saints said to me, "stop weeping and consider this; there is One from the Lion Tribe, the Tribe of Judah, the Son of David, Who by His victory on the cross has earned the privilege; He and He alone can open the scroll and break its seven seals."**

**Rev 5:6 It was then that I saw a diminutive Lamb; the young Lamb looked as if it had been slain; the Lamb was in the center of the throne room surrounded by the four special angels and the church age saints. The Lamb had seven horns representing His perfect kingdom which was purchased by His perfect work; the Lamb had seven eyes representing the Holy Spirit sent into the world to assist and glorify Him.**

As earlier taught, the "seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" represent God the Holy Spirit in His mission to glorify the Incarnate Christ; furthermore such representation teaches that He (the Lamb) possesses the full power and backing of the divine facilitator - the Holy Spirit. Taking the contents of these verses together, the Lamb represents Christ as sovereign in His own authority, omnipotent in power, and worthy as the Redeemer who died.

Joh 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

Merrill C. Tenney writes "the title Lamb stresses particularly His redemptive aspects since it is modified by the phrase 'as though it had been slain.'"

Rev 5:6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

Rev 5:9 And they (the 4 Angels and the 24 Elders) sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Rev 5:12 In a loud voice they (the innumerable angels) sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Recall the lamb used in the Passover Sacrifice was a young lamb. The protocol for the Passover was:

- The lamb was to be the best and healthiest of the flock.
- The animal was to be brought into the house and watched for four days prior to the feast.
- It became a pet of the family.
- The head of the family was to cut the animal's throat, cook it and the family would eat it.
- The lesson was to painfully teach the sadness of God's holiness demanding perfect redemption for sin.

The diminutive lamb in the Apocalypse would certainly seem to emphasize His sacrifice as the Passover Lamb which makes Him "worthy" to take the Scroll from the Father. The Passover Lamb recall was a very Jewish symbol thus also is the Tribulation--a time of Jacob's trouble. Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 5:7

NIV

Rev 5:7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

God the Son is seen taking the scroll from the hand of God the Father, a prerogative only the Son had earned. In the act of taking the book from God the Father, it is evident that judgment and power over the earth are committed to Christ the Son of God.

Dan 7:1-14 is a parallel passage.

Expanded Translation

Dan 7:1 In the first year of the Babylonian co-regency of Nabonidus and Belshazzar, in c. 556 B.C., I had a dream. I was lying on my bed when I saw several visions. I recorded the visions, in summary fashion, in my diary.

Dan 7:2 I, Daniel, was lying in my bed. I looked up and saw the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. It was clearly the Mediterranean Sea.

Dan 7:3 Four dreadful creatures, each different from the other, came out of the sea; the sea represented the vast confused gentile world.

Dan 7:4 The first was like a lion; it had wings like an eagle. This first creature represented Babylon. I watched until its wings were ripped off and it was made to stand on its two back feet like a man. The heart of a man was given to it. The bizarre series of events pointed to Nebuchadnezzar's bout with his zoanthropy, his temporary demise as ruler of Babylon and his recovery after his regeneration.

Dan 7:5 I saw a second awful creature; it looked like a bear. The second beast represented the Medo-Persian Empire. The giant grizzly rose up on one of its sides. Between its teeth, and protruding from its mouth, were three ribs. The three ribs represented Babylon, Lydia and Egypt; these were three nations conquered by the Medo-Persians. A command from one of the angels standing nearby declared, "Get up and eat more!"

Dan 7:6 And then I saw another beast rise out of the sea, one that looked like a leopard. On its back it had four wings. This beast also had four heads. It was given authority to rule.

The nature of the leopard with its winged back spoke of Alexander the Great's speed of conquest. He conquered the world in 12 short years. The four heads represented Alexander's four generals who, after Alexander's death in 323 B.C., ruled four Hellenistic empires--Cassander, Lysimachus, Seleucus and Ptolemy

Dan 7:7 In a terrifying night vision, I saw a fourth beast, more terrifying, and frightening and powerful than the other three. It had huge iron teeth. What it didn't grind with its teeth it smashed with its feet. It was different from all the former beasts; it had ten horns coming out of its head.

Dan 7:8 While thinking about these horns, a little horn appeared before me. Three of the beast's horns were pulled up by the roots to make room for it. This horn had the eyes of a man speaking boastfully of the things that it would do; the little horn was particularly critical of God.

Dan 7:9 Suddenly my eyes were directed toward heaven. There I saw thrones being set in place by none other than God the Father, the Ancient of Days. He took His seat in the middle of the throne room. He wore a robe, as white as snow, signifying His absolute Righteousness; the hair of His head was white and thick like wool, a sign of His earned respect. His throne was elevated, surrounded by flaming fire. The throne had wheels that were all ablaze, as a symbol of His omnipresence and severe judgment upon all who deny His authority, rule and protocol.

Dan 7:10 I saw a river of fire flowing, like a sea of lava, from the throne room of God. Vast numbers of angels stood before Him. I estimate their numbers in the billions. It was announced that the Supreme Court of Heaven would soon be in session. A large set of books was brought into the heavenly court room.

Dan 7:11 I watched, in amazement, as the little horn, the Antichrist, boasted of his greatness and power. I kept on watching until he was slain at the Second Advent of Christ. I watched further, as Christ ordered that the Antichrist's body be thrown into the blazing fire of Hades.

Dan 7:12 Satan and his demons were allowed to live. They were chained for the greater part of one thousand years. At the end of the Millennial reign of Christ, they were released, but only for a short period of time.

Dan 7:13 I continued to dream. I saw the Messiah. He looked like the Son of Man, the incarnate Christ. He came clothed in the clouds of heaven, and was led before the throne of the Ancient of Days.

Dan 7:14 The Ancient of Days gave Christ all authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language were required to worship Him. The dominion given Him was an everlasting one; one which would not pass away, a dominion that would never be destroyed.

In Dan 7:13-14 Daniel reveals the ultimate triumph of Christ when the kingdoms of the world are given to Christ.

In a future day complete authority over the world will be realized by Christ, an authority which He will exercise both in the judgments which precede His second coming and in His reign for one thousand years which will follow His second advent.

Once again in the book of The Revelation the focus is upon Christ, the central character of the book and the One whose glory is supremely revealed in the unfolding pages of its prophecies. Let me here give you an expanded translation of Rev 5:7.

### **Expanded Translation:**

**Rev 5:7 Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God boldly approached the throne and took the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father Who was seated on the throne.**

Now let's see what we can learn from Rev 5:8:

NIV

Rev 5:8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The importance and significance of the scene which John saw in heaven are recognized on the part of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. By their obeisance and worship of the Lamb as recorded in verse ten, it is clear Christ is the Lamb and the event observed is prominent and about to excite action, something major is about to happen.

It should be clear that the Lamb is not merely a prophet or an exalted angel but none other than the Lord Jesus Christ in all the majesty of His deity, even though portrayed in His sacrificial role as the Lamb who died on the cross. The elders are said to possess golden vials full of odors which are declared to be the prayers of the saints. This is consistent with the tabernacle worship liturgy where the altar of incense in the Holy Place serves as a place where incense is burned giving off a sweet fragrance wafting to heaven into the throne room of God.

All of the prayers uttered by God's saints are recorded and kept. The allegory seems to stress how important to God are our needs, tears, desires, joys, praise and concerns. Like the death of His saints so also are the prayers of His saints. Every prayer has been kept in the twenty-four golden vials.

John Walvoord has written:

“The golden vials or bowls filled with sacred perfume or incense represent the prayers of the saints according to the text. Here in heaven the importance of prayer in the earthly scene is inferred. Later in the book testimony is made to the continued witness on earth of those who trust in Christ during the time of dreadful tribulation. Their prayers are said to be as sweet incense before the throne of God. The role of the elders seems to be one of sympathetic presentation, not that of a mediator of earthly prayers. The symbolism of bowls of incense representing the prayers of the saints is reflected in Psalm 141:2 where David cried to the Lord, "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

Let me give you an expanded translation of verse eight:

## **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 5:8 And when Christ as the rejuvenated Lamb took the scroll, the four living beings (four special angels) and the twenty four elders (representing all the translated saints) fell down before the Lamb, each raptured believer of the church age was holding a harp and a golden bowl full of incense which represented the prayers of all of God's children.**

Now let's take a look at Rev 5:9-10

NIV

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

Rev 5:10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Along with their worship and the use of the harps and the incense, they sing a new song in which Christ is declared to be worthy because of His work of redemption and His transformation of men into kings and priests. Bloomfield expresses the wonder "that someone has not written a great oratorio on Revelation. The references to songs, trumpets, and chants provide an important aspect of the moving scene of the book of Revelation."

Swete believes that the reference to "kings and priests" (which occurs two other times in Rev 1:6 and Rev 20:6) may have been part of an early hymn which had the line "Thou hast made us a kingdom, priests to God and our father, and we shall reign on the earth." In Rev 5:9-10 additional light is cast on their identification.

Since the twenty-four elders in their new song declare that God has redeemed them by His blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation and has made them kings and priests they must indeed be redeemed men. The symphony is declared to be a new song, a song which could not have been sung prior to Christ's redemptive act, a song over and beyond an ascription of praise to His person or recognition of His attributes.

Here the Lamb is declared to have the right to rule, not simply by virtue of His Deity but because of His victory over sin and death by His act of supreme redemption. The right to open the scroll has been secured by His conquering death and His providing an efficacious sacrifice for sin. The act of redemption is declared to be world- wide in that every kindred, tongue, and nation has been given the option of redemption. The song of redemption recorded in this chapter would be entirely normal for saints but would be rather unusual if the angels were involved. Nowhere else in the Bible are angels pictured as singing since sin entered the world. In the early joy of creation before it was spoiled by sin, Job refers to the time "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7). The morning stars here are commonly identified with angels. Since Adam's sin, however, there is no further record of angels singing.

Now let's take a look at Revelation five verses eleven and twelve.

Rev 5:11 And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels who encircled the throne and a voice of the living beings and of the elders and their number was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands;

Rev 5:12 Saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb who has been slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and eulogy.

John introduces the exaltation of the Lamb in verse 11 with the familiar words "And I beheld, and I heard." Forty-four times in the book he declares that he beheld or saw something and twenty-seven times he declares, "I heard." The tremendous scene left a lasting impression upon John. In concentric circles with the Lamb in the center surrounded by the living creatures and the twenty-four elders, the angelic hosts are seen on every side numbering ten thousand times ten thousand, an innumerable throng in one mighty symphony of praise. They joined in 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." The sevenfold attributes ascribed to the Lamb sum up their worship and adoration. This great chorus of praise is a prelude to the mighty scenes which will unfold, when in succeeding chapters, the seven sealed book is unrolled. The twenty four elders sing, and the angels chant their praise in this impressive vista.

And now for our last two verses of chapter five:

NIV

Rev 5:13 And every created thing which is in the heaven and upon the earth and under the earth and upon the sea and all the things that are in them, I heard saying, To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be the eulogy and the honor and the glory and the power forever and forever.

Rev 5:14 And the four living beings kept on saying, Amen. And the twenty- four elders fell down and worshipped the One who lives forever and ever.

Principles:

To this mighty chorus in heaven is added the praise of every creature on earth and under the earth and in the sea. John hears them all join in blessing and praise to the One on the throne and to the Lamb. Climaxing the scene of worship, the four living creatures pronounce their amen, and the twenty-four elders once again fall down and worship. The closing expression of verse 14, "that liveth forever and ever," is omitted in better the manuscripts, but as Walvoord writes "the reference is clear in any case." With this tremendous awesome introduction, the ground is laid for the unfolding revelation beginning in chapter 6, when the scene will shift once again from heaven to the earth. The beauty and wonder of the scene in chapter 5 are in startling contrast to the dark clouds of divine judgment portrayed as falling upon the earth in the tribulation as revealed in the chapters which follow. The scenes of earth are always dark in comparison to the glory of heaven. The Christian engulfed by temptation, persecution, and trial can take heart in the fact that our Lord also suffered and was tried, and that He in triumph ascended on high having completed His earthly work.

Those who follow in His steps while in the world may endure many afflictions, but they are assured that they will share with the Lord His glory and His grace throughout all eternity. The scene of chapter 5 is prophetic of future events in which the church of Jesus Christ bearing witness in the world today will be in the presence of the Lord in heaven. Those who have received Jesus Christ as Savior and who have entered into the blessings of His redemptive work will be numbered among the tens of thousands pictured in chapter 5 as giving their worship and praise to the Savior. That which John contemplated in prophetic vision will be an actual part of the future experience of the saints of God as they wait with Christ for the consummating events of the age and the establishment of His kingdom. With the introduction provided in chapters 4 and 5 we see the heavenly side of the picture the narrative in John's vision now turns to the earth in chapter 6. The same Lord and Redeemer who is the object of worship and praise on the part of the saints is also the righteous Judge of the wicked earth and the One by whose authority the terrible events of the tribulation unfold.

Let's close our review with an expanded translation of Revelation Chapter Five.

### **Expanded Translation**

**Rev 5:1 “And there sitting on the throne was God the Father and in His right hand was a scroll. There was writing on both sides of the scroll but the scroll itself was sealed by seven wax seals.**

**Rev 5:2 And I saw a large angel fly around the throne. The size and strength of the angel was impressive. He landed upon the Father's throne and shouted with a loud voice in an urgent tone, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll, Who is able to break its seals?’**

**Rev 5:3 Sadly there was nothing but silence in heaven. There was no one found either in heaven or earth or under the earth that would even approach the scroll. There was neither angel nor man worthy enough to open the scroll.**

**Rev 5:4 I began to weep audibly, openly and profusely because no one was found worthy.**

**Rev 5:5 And one of the church age saints said to me, "Stop weeping and consider this; there is One from the Lion Tribe, the Tribe of Judah, the Son of David, Who by His victory on the cross has earned the right to open that scroll. He and He alone can break the seven seals.”**

**Rev 5:6 It was then that I saw a diminutive Lamb; the young Lamb looked as if it had been slain. The Lamb was in the center of the throne room surrounded by the four special angels and the church age saints. The Lamb had seven horns representing His perfect kingdom which was purchased by His perfect work, The Lamb had seven eyes representing the Holy Spirit earlier sent into the world to assist and glorify Him.**

**Rev 5:7 Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God boldly approached the throne and took the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father.**

**Rev 5:8 And when the Lamb took the scroll, the four living beings (four special angels) and the twenty four elders (representing all the translated saints) fell down before the Lamb. Each raptured believer of the church age was holding a harp and a golden bowl full of incense which represented the prayers of all of God's children.**

**Rev 5:9 And the Church Age saints sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seven seals, because as the Lamb of God You died spiritually to redeem mankind. Those availing themselves of His redemption came out from every tribe and language and people and nation. There were believers from all walks of life and nationalities entering the gates of heaven.**

**Rev 5:10 And I heard someone say, "You have made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they will reign with Christ on the earth.'**

**Rev 5:11 And I saw and heard the voice of many nondescript angels, the four special angels and church age saints who were too numerous to count.**

**Rev 5:12 They exclaimed in unison with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, by His victory on the cross He has earned the right to rule; to Him be riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory.'**

**Rev 5:13 And every created being in the heavens and on the earth and under the earth and upon the sea were heard to exclaim, "To Him Who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be the honor, and the glory and the power forever and ever."**

**Rev 5:14 And the four living beings repeatedly cried out, Amen, Amen, Amen and Amen! And the church age saints fell down and worshipped the Christ who lives forever and ever.**