

# BOOK OF REVELATION

## Part 11 – Presenting the Scroll: Chapter 5:1-14

### I. INTRODUCTION

We are now in the future after the conclusion of the church age. While we study these events in heaven, the Tribulation has begun on earth for those left behind after the Rapture and there is no doubt much chaos on the earth at this time. Among the missing would be airplane pilots, truck drivers, drivers of various automobiles, missing personnel in various medical facilities, power plants, military defense positions, and even some in authority. Also the Holy Spirit has been removed from the earth as well, which we did not mention in the previous study. This removal of the Holy Spirit in the Rapture is referred to in 2 Thessalonians 2:7-9. The word “let” carries the meaning in the original language to “hold down now” or to restrain. The Holy Spirit restrains or “holds down” evil in the world to a great extent, but when He is taken out with the church, there will be no restraint upon evil at all. The “spirit of antichrist” which is already in the world will have total freedom to proceed with all of its evil intents.

*2 Thessalonians 2:7-9 “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. (8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: (9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,”*

Chapter 4: We studied the opening scene in Heaven following the Rapture of the Church which is represented in the first verse of Chapter 4. John's vision then moves through an open doorway into Heaven where he sees the Throne of God and all of its surroundings. We see the glory of God manifest like an ancient jasper stone that is translucent and shows many colors, a sardine stone which shows reddish colors, a rainbow which is created by a refraction of light from God's glory. We see that God has a throne and he is sat upon it. We also see the four “beasts” the living creatures with same four different faces on each of them: a lion, a calf (or an ox), an eagle, and a man. The description given by John is given in more detail by the prophet Ezekiel and the book of Isaiah describes them as seraphim angels. These are special angelic living creations of God. We also see the twenty four elders, representative of the saints of all the dispensations, before God's throne with white robe and crowns upon their heads. Lastly, we see the sea of glass that is clear as crystal, representing the massive saints from all the dispensations of time. The view of God's throne is overwhelming and no human language can do it justice.

Now that we have studied Chapter 4, we continue in Heaven with the scene before God's throne and an important event that is happening: the presenting of the sealed book.

## II. EXEGESIS – OPENING THE SCROLL IN THE HAND OF GOD

*VERSE 1: “And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.”*

Notice what hand God is holding this sealed book in: The right hand. The right hand is often the hand used by royalty to gesture power.

At that time books were not printed with a moveable type and all of its individual pages bound together on one side. Instead books were written on a substance called papyrus, which was often made out of sheep skin and was very durable. Hence the modern expression to refer to the reception of a college or high school diplomas as “receiving your sheep skin”. A book or letter would be written onto a continuous piece of papyrus and then rolled up into a scroll. Then this scroll would be sealed with hot wax and applied with a seal

In this case this was a multipart sealed scroll. One would break the first seal, unroll the scroll until reaching the next seal, then would break that seal and continue to unroll the scroll until coming to the next seal. This process would continue until all the seals were broken and the whole scroll were opened and had been read.

*VERSE 2: “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”*

Scripture does not tells us for sure which angel it was that was pronouncing a proclamation but the angel used a sufficiently loud voice to get the attention of every one present before the throne of God. Remember that there is continuous worship by the seraphim angelic “beasts” before God's throne and also the lightning and the sound of thunder proceeding from the glory of God. So therefore the angel would have used a loud voice to get the attention of all present.

Notice the question that he asks. In order to break the seals on this scrolled book with numerous seals on it that this person must be worthy to open it. Since the scrolled book is in the hand of God, it was obviously written and sealed by God as well with his special seal.

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

Notice how the Apostle John makes the observation very clear here. No one was found worthy or “deserving” to open the book:

- (1) **Heaven:** Obviously the context here is referring to the abode of God, the angels, and the redeemed in Christ. This is what he was currently observing in his vision.
- (2) **Earth:** The meaning of the word “earth” here is the surface of the earth, specifically the land and those who inhabit the land. Those people alive on earth.
- (3) **Under the earth:** The meaning of this phrase is those who have died and are buried and more specifically the prison of the fallen angels and hell, the prison for those who have died and rejected Christ as Saviour.

Notice one more thing. None of these were even worthy to look at the pages of this book even if it had not been sealed. They were not eligible to read its pages either.

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

John was very sad and wept with sorrow that was comparable to the weeping that one would have when hearing about the death of a loved one. Because no one could open the scrolled book, and no one could even read what was written in the book. The meaning of the word “wept” in the original language was to “wail aloud” and not grieving softly or silently. This grief of the Apostle John was deeply felt and genuine.

***VERSE 5: “And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”***

The elder mentioned here is one of the 24 elders mentioned in Chapter 4. This elder had great news for the Apostle John. There was ONE worthy or “deserving” was found worthy. Take a look at His description and you will have no doubt whom he is talking about. This is a clear reference to the Lord Jesus Christ that was revealed in Chapter 1. Let us examine the statement closely:

**(1) Lion of the tribe of Juda: The Lord Jesus was born out of the tribe of Judah**

***Hebrews 7:14 “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda;...”***

The genealogy of the Lord Jesus is given in Matthew 1 and Luke 3. They slightly differ but they differ from David to Christ, probably listing the lineage of Joseph in Matthew and that of Mary in Luke. These genealogies are given to prove that Jesus Christ was descended from David and the tribe of Judah, and therefore He and His coming were fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

***Matthew 1:1-2, 16 “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. (2) Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; (16) And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”***

**(2) Offspring of David: King David was descended from the tribe of Judah as the genealogies in Matthew and Luke state. See the previous verses.**

***VERSE 6: “And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain,”***

Now the Apostle John sees the one introduced by one of the 24 elders, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is referred to in several places in scripture as being like a lamb or specifically the Lamb of God. A lamb is the perfect picture of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was innocent, without blemish, and was sacrificed for the sins of all mankind.

A prophecy made by the patriarch Abraham concerning the Messiah:

***Genesis 22:8 “And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”***

Description given by God of the lamb to be used for first and all future passover observances.

**Exodus 12:3-5** “(3) Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house: (4) And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. (5) Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep, or from the goats:”

The prophet Isaiah prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus and compares his crucifixion to a lamb being slaughtered or sheered for its wool. The lamb was total innocent and did not deserve either fate.

**Isaiah 53:7** “*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*”

John the Baptist refers to him as “The Lamb of God”

**John 1:29** “*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*”

*“...having seven horns and seven eyes,  
which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”*

The seven horns and seven eyes are figurative here because the Apostle John defines what they represent. These are the seven Spirits of God. Who are these seven Spirits of God? They are referred to in Revelation 1:4 and Revelation 4:5

**Revelation 1:4** “*John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;*”

**Revelation 4:5** “*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*”

These are seven special seraphim angels of God. The word “seraphim” means in the original language “burning” or “on fire”. They have the appearance of a burning fire. They have a special mission that are sent forth into the earth to carry out a special work that God has commanded them to do.

**VERSE 7:** “*And he came and took the book out of the right hand  
of him that sat upon the throne.*”

The Lord Jesus came to God, specifically God the Father, the first person of the Godhead, to receive the book, in a form of a seven sealed scroll. Notice no hesitancy or reservation on His part in taking the scroll. Also noticed which hand of God the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ takes the scroll: his RIGHT hand.

The right hand was used in scripture to indicate favor, blessing, or bestowing by one upon another. Therefore it was appropriate for God the Father to give the scroll to the Lord Jesus with His right hand, for opening and reading.

*VERSE 8: “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”*

Immediately we see the reaction of those in front of the throne of God (the father). They could have only one reaction, the one you see here. They bowed down to the ground beneath them just like the Apostle John did in Chapter 1. Notice what you see in their hands:

- (1) Harps: Musical instruments of worship. You only see in scripture the redeemed saints of God singing in praise to God before His Throne. The angels are not recorded in scripture ever singing but saying praise to God.
- (2) Golden Vials of Odors: Which is again symbolism, because the Apostle John interprets it for you. They have in their hands the prayers of the saints. The genuine prayers are a sweet odor to the nostrils of God. They make him feel very well pleased.

*VERSE 9 “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”*

The 24 elders sing, which the angels of God do not sing, a new song of praise to God. The Lord Jesus had redeemed them to God by the only thing that could have provided redemption: His shed blood on the cross of Calvary. Notice also that the Lord Jesus Christ had redeemed these not only out of the nation of Israel, whom God worked through in the dispensation of the Law, but out of every group of people on the earth, from whom His Church was constituted. Notice the groups. The list starts with the smallest and goes to the largest in size:

- (1) Kindred: a tribe or a large family
- (2) Tongue: a dialect or an whole language. Can be several different tribes.
- (3) People: a group of people in a region. Can be several different tongues.
- (4) Nation: a group of people with a common culture. Can be several different people groups.

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

This is a reference to the coming Millennial Kingdom of Christ that would last for a 1000 years and then to be followed by the reign of Christ for all eternity. This reward is also for all the redeemed in the Lord Jesus Christ of all the ages as well. Kings and Priests also carried authority given to them by God. We will share with the 24 elders in this responsibility. We as the redeemed will not be sitting around heaven floating on clouds strumming harps as the stereotypes of heaven are portrayed. We will have work that God has given us to do and we will spend time praising His holy name.

*VERSE 11: "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;"*

Now we see the angels of God joining the 24 elders in praise to God. We do not know the number of the angels of God, but they are quite numerous. The ten thousand times ten thousand is 100 million. The phrase "thousands of thousands" was meant to add to the meaning of the previous phrase "ten thousand times ten thousand" One can take that phrase to mean there were in excess of 100 million angels before the throne of God. This does not include the number of angels that would have been elsewhere in God's creation.

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

Notice they did not speak this softly but with a loud and no doubt unified voice. They acknowledge the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary. They are now fixed in their estate that they choose right after creation. The Bible says they desire to look into our salvation, desire no doubt to know what it is like to experience redemption, but can never experience it.

*1 Peter 1:12 "Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."*

*VERSE 13: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."*

Notice here the words every creature. It seems that even the creation of God here joins in giving glory to God. It is hard for us to conceive that the created things of God could give glory. When Jesus was entering Jerusalem some of the Pharisees rebuke Jesus for his disciples glorifying Him. Jesus response is interesting to note:

**Luke 19:40 "And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."**

I must confess that I cannot fathom the creation itself speaking out in glory to God but if God made it, He certainly could give it the ability to bring glory to him. The Lord Jesus does truly deserve praise both now and for all of eternity. Wow, what a Saviour we have.

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

We see that the four "living creatures", the special seraphim angels introduced in Chapter 4, say "Amen". The word "Amen" in the original language carries the meaning of "trustworthy" or as an expression "so be it". They were affirming the worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ to receive the scroll and that the worship given to Him was most appropriate. The 24 elders simply continue the worship they started after the Lord Jesus received the scroll.

### **III. APPLICATIONS**

- **The Lord Jesus Christ is the only one who is worthy to open this scroll because He was the agent of creation and redemption of all mankind. No one else could be worthy.**
- **The Lord Jesus Christ's appearance was like a Lamb that was slain. His glorified body will be the only thing in heaven that will not be made whole, a reminder of the sacrifice that he endured for all mankind and the saints throughout all eternity. Are we sharing the truth of the sacrifice that He made to give him those “wounds” which He carries even now.**
- **The saints from around the throne will be from all nations, dialects, cultures, and families. They will have unity in Christ around that throne. We should not shun the fellowship of another believer because of their nation of origin, language background, cultural background and family of origin. We should practice that unity in DOCTRINE now.**
- **We need to spend more time in worship now to prepare for the day when we will worship God in person.**