

Text: Rev 5.1-14

Again, the first thing we need to do for today's study is recover the outline of Revelation from Rev 1.19.

Rev 1.19 "Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."

- The things which you have seen: the vision of Jesus in Rev 1
- The things which are: the letters to the seven churches in Rev 2-3
- The things which will take place **after these things**...

"This phrase introduces a new vision most of the times we find it in Revelation (Rev 4.1, 7.1, 9; 15.5; 18.1; 19.1, compare Rev 1.19, 9.12, 20.3)."¹

Compare Rev 4.1:

Rev 4.1 ¶ **After these things** I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

The scene in Revelation 4 marks out the things that were most impressive to John's startled gaze, beginning with the Throne and the ONE who sat on the throne, then the creatures and furnishings that surrounded the throne.

In chapter 5, the focus narrows to one person, who becomes the "most important person in the room" by the end of the chapter.

I. Distress and resolution: the Root of David (1-5)

A. The seven sealed book (1)

1. The focus of attention narrows to God's right hand
2. The book is a scroll, sealed on the edges with seven seals (to prevent opening by unauthorized persons)
3. The book has writing on both sides: full of revelation from God

¹ Donald C. S. Johnson, *Thru the Bible Notes* (unpublished, 2005).

4. Notably, God instructed Daniel to “seal up the book” in Dan 12.4, 9

^{NAU} **Daniel 12.4** “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.”

^{NAU} **Daniel 12.9** He said, “Go *your way*, Daniel, for *these* words are concealed and sealed up until the end time.

The book “may represent the book of prophecies God instructed Daniel to seal until the end times (Dan. 12:4, 9).”²

B. The authority of opening the seals (2-4)

1. Angelic challenge: who is worthy? – it is one thing to be the bearer of the word of God (as a prophet) but another to execute the word of God (as Judge) (2)
 - a. Opening the book means breaking the seals step by step
 - b. After breaking the first seal, the unveiling of God’s revelation proceeds until one comes to the second seal
 - c. The implication is that opening the book brings the prophecies to reality
2. Inability of all creation – no created being found worthy of executing God’s judgement (3)
3. Distress of the apostle: John’s great desire was to know the words of God, the full significance of the book is unknown, but as a man of God he longs to know (4)

C. Reassurance from an elder: the announcement of the Root of David (5)

1. Identity: the Lion of Judah, the root of David (the Messiah)
 - a. The Lion of Judah (Gen 49.9)
 - b. The Root of David (Isa 11.1; Jer 23.5, 33.15; Mt 22.42-43; Rm 15.12)

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Rev 5.1.

2. Authority: he overcame all so that he would have the authority to open the book

II. The Lamb standing, as if slain (6-10)

A. The new figure appears: the lamb standing, as if slain (6)

1. John's vision has the qualities of a dream – unexpected shifts in what one expects to see
2. He looked to see a lion, but saw a lamb, standing, but also in the guise of having been slain as a temple sacrifice
 - a. The sacrifice gained him the authority
 - b. The activity of judgement reveals his Lion-like character
 - c. The lamb now becomes the focus of the vision, the most important feature of the throne-room in heaven

"The emphasis is not on the crucifixion but on the resurrection since the slain Lamb is standing, not lying dead."³

3. The sevens

- a. Seven horns: perfection of power
- b. Seven eyes: perfection of insight (which are the seven Spirits, *i.e.* the Holy Spirit)

These illumine the cooperation of all three persons of the Trinity in the judgement of the earth – the Son has the Spirit of God

4. The Lamb is thus endowed with all power and all wisdom and insight, just as is the Father

B. The taking of the book in the hand of the lamb (7-8)

1. Authority is transferred from Father to Son (7, compare Dan 7.13-14)
2. Assembly is moved to worship (8)
 - a. Both angels and men (creatures and elders)

³ Charles C. Ryrie, *Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 41.

b. Elders carry harps and incense (the prayers of the saints)

Note: in the OT, incense in the Tabernacle/Temple symbolized prayers

“Perhaps specifically the prayers of saints over many ages for the Lord to finally come and avenge the wrongs they have suffered at the hands of unbelieving men”⁴

Note: “The gender of the participle ‘having’ shows that the harps and bowls are used only by the elders and not the living ones.”⁵

C. The new song to the Lamb (9-10)

1. The imagery of the new song relates to songs celebrating God’s deliverance in the Psalms

a. The Psalmists (Ps 40.1-3, 98.1)

b. The Suffering Servant (Isa 42.10)

c. Gaebelein identifies the “old song” with the song of angels celebrating creation (Job 38.7) — the new song comes in celebrating redemption.⁶

2. Four causes of rejoicing

a. You were slain

b. You purchased men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation

c. You made these people a kingdom and priests to God

d. You ensured these people will reign on earth

⁴ Johnson, *Thru the Bible Notes*, 30.4.

⁵ Ryrie, 42.

⁶ Arno Gaebelein, *The Revelation: An Analysis and Exposition of the Last Book of the Bible* (Chicago: Our Hope Press, n. d.), 49.

III. The Lamb worshiped by all (11-14)

- A. The scene widens to a much larger perspective: John hears the voices of a mighty multitude (11)
- Angels
 - Living Creatures
 - Elders
 - Myriads of myriads, thousands of thousands – a myriad is 10,000, this is a magnificent scene
- B. The song of the angels: Worthy is the Lamb (12)
- Note seven expressions of blessing to the Lamb
 - Note also the word “and” put deliberately between each quality, adding emphasis
- C. The song of creation: Blessing and Honor to our God (13)
- “The unified worship of both the Lamb and the Father, ascribing similar terms to both figures, argues well for the deity of both Father and Son. Such words and such actions in such a place are unthinkable unless both Father and Son are equal in nature and being.”⁷
- D. The worship at the throne: Amen and amen – angels and men in prostration (14)

With this glorious scene, we stand with anticipation to the unrolling of the scroll which will follow in the next chapter.

⁷ Johnson, *Thru the Bible Notes*, 30.4 original source unknown.