

Rev 5 (Introduction)B

Chap. 4 sets the stage for the event of chap. 5, the enthronement of Jesus Christ.

The time of chap. 4 is between the casting out of Satan and the arrival of Jesus at His ascension.

The key word of chap. 5 is *Aworthy*.@ The Lamb is qualified to open the book and sit on the throne.

The vision of chap. 5 clearly describes a point in time rather than a general description of heavenly activity.

The main OT background text of Rev 5 is the throne vision of Dan 7.

Rev 5:1B

Ancient thrones were often more like couches than armchairs, there was room for someone to sit to the right of the king.

That *Abook*@ means *Ascroll*@ here is evident from Rev 6:14 where the sky splits like a *Abook*@ (Greek: *biblion*) being rolled up.

The scroll form of books was the primary one in the ancient world until well after Revelation was written.

The codex form of books that we know seems to have been invent around the time of Revelation.

Writing *Awithin*@ and *Aon the back*@ can mean three different things, 1) written on both sides, 2) sealed on the back. . .

The third possible meaning of *Awithin*@ and *Aon the back*@ is a double document for verification of a covenant.

The scroll of Rev 5 is sealed to keep the contents concealed, the contents are not revealed until all 7 seals are broken.

Rev 5:1 (Excursis on the Identity and Contents of the Sealed Scroll)B

The content of the scroll is a mystery of decisive importance.

Since it is a scroll, the book=s contents are not revealed in chap. 6, all 7 seals must be broken first.

The sealing of books was for concealment or validation of the book=s contents.

The purpose of sealing here is concealment, none of the scroll is readable until all the seals are broken.

The right side of the king is the highest place of honor.

The scroll could represent the davidic kingship, which was lost at the exile but regained in Christ.

The scroll of Rev 5 looks similar to a Roman will, in that case to take the book means to gain the heavenly inheritance.

In the OT, if someone lost their property, a relative could buy it back, restoring the property to the family.

The scroll of Ezek 2-3 is background to Rev 10, but not Rev 5.

The sealed prophecy of Isa 29-30 is not a likely candidate for the meaning and identity of the scroll of Rev 5.

Is this the Lamb>s book of life (Rev 21:27; 13:8)? Probably too narrow a focus.

The scroll is one of three emblems of Israelite kingly rule: the scroll, the throne and crown.

The best interpretation for the content of the sealed scroll is that it contains the Λ mystery of God@ (Rev 10:7).

The handoff between the One sitting on the throne and the Lamb may echo the opening of the book (Rev 1:1).

The content of the scroll is the book of Revelation and much more, God=s plan for healing the universe.

The scene in Rev 5 is the enthronement in heaven of Jesus as the Davidic king over the earth.

COL 294 suggests that judgment is at least a part of what the scroll is about.

Letter 65, 1898 of Ellen White suggests that the scroll is a comprehensive account of eternal history.

Rev 5:2B

The powerful angel with a loud voice would be at the highest rank in the angelic hierarchy, possibly Gabriel.

Λ Worthy@ means to be deserving, fitted for or qualified, in this text it is particularly moral fitness that is in view.

The question about worthiness is followed by a pair of purpose clauses introduced by Greek infinitives.

Rev 5:3B

Opening the scroll required someone outside the creation yet someone other than the One sitting on the throne.

That no one can even Λ see@ the book implies that the Lamb is the only one whose experience enables him to understand the book.

Only a demonstration of God=s true character, in a form that the creation could understand, could have truly convincing power.

Rev 5:4B

Why John wept depends on the identity and contents of the sealed scroll.

Rev 5:4 (Spiritual Lesson)B

John illustrates the human frustration at being unable to know and control the future.

Rev 5:5B

The command not to weep is a present imperative, which implies ceasing what John has been continually doing.

The one who is worthy has kingly authority based on his natural descent from the tribe of Judah.

Λ Root of David@ here implies that the worthy one existed before David and established his throne (2 Sam 7:8-14), he is divine.

Rev 5:6B

This verse locates the Lamb by referring back to the description of the heavenly throne room in chapter four.

∆In the midst of the throne@ may mean immediately in front of the throne.

John hears lion (rev 5:5) but sees a lamb. This is a literary pattern in Rev, what he hears and sees look different but are the same.

God rules the universe, but not by force, we are drawn to His character by the slain Lamb.

It is unusual for lambs to have horns, so right from the start of this verse we can tell it should not be taken literally.

The Lamb=s seven horns represent omnipotence, complete and total power.

For love to be genuine, it must be free; free to love, but free also to reject love and rebel against the Lover.

Satan exercised that freedom and began a rebellion in heaven, in which he attacked the character and government of God.

To combat Satan=s rebellion with the use of force would prove Satan=s charges correct.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross is presented here as the model of how God rules the universe.

While Satan is absent from Rev 4-5, his shadow looms in the background of 4:8 and 5:5-6.

The slain Lamb is the answer to Satan=s accusations against the character and government of God.

The seven eyes and seven spirits represent Christ=s complete knowledge and omnipresence through the Spirit.

The seven spirits going out here recalls the day of Pentecost, it was also the day of the Lamb=s enthronement in heavenly places.

Rev 5:7B

A lamb taking a scroll is hard to visualize, Rev=s symbols are intended to be heard more than seen.

The Lamb ∆takes@ the book, He does not passively receive it, because He is worthy to take it.

Rev 5:7 (Excursis on The Time of Rev Five)B

At what point in history does the Lamb take the book?

The climax of the seven churches (Rev 3:21) provides the key to understanding the time when the Lamb takes the book.

The first two clauses of Rev 3:21 are present continuous (∆the one who overcomes@) and future (∆will sit@).

In contrast, the last two clauses of Rev 3:21 express a point in past time (∆overcame,@ ∆sat down@).

The link between Rev 3:21 and 5:5 shows that the scene of Rev 5 is in John=s past, it is not end-time.

The cross is the ground for the Lamb taking the scroll, and that action includes His enthronement in heaven.

Rev 3:21 contains a summary of John's purpose for the seven seals.

Rev 3:21 contains Jesus joining the Father's throne (Rev 4-5), and the overcomers joining Jesus' throne (Rev 7).

Rev 3:21 shows that chap. 6 is about the overcoming of God's people from the cross to the Second Coming.

The most natural reading of Rev 5 has to do with the events of 31 A.D, the cross and the enthronement.

The scene of Rev 5 parallels many other enthronement texts in the NT (Matt 26:64; Acts 2:33-34; Col 3:1; Heb 8:1-2).

The sending out of the Spirit into the whole world in Rev 5:6 recalls Pentecost.

Exod 19 and Ezek 1 were the ancient synagogue readings for the Feast of Pentecost.

The first half of Revelation focuses on the realities of the whole Christian age.

Likewise, the seven seals run from Pentecost (Rev 5:6; Acts 2) to the Second Coming (Rev 6:15-17).

In Rev 4-5 God is praised for creation and the cross, in Rev 19 for the defeat of end-time Babylon.

The white horses of Rev 6 and 19 are parallel, the first wears a victory crown, the latter a royal one.

Rev 6:10 makes clear that end-time judgment has not yet happened, so Rev 5 cannot be that.

God's judgment has not yet begun in 6:10, in 19:2 it is already past, a clear movement in time.

The fifth seal comes in the middle of Christian history, between Pentecost and the Second Coming.

The end time part of Rev 6 parallels Rev 19:17-18.

The first half of Rev alludes to the daily service (*tamid*), which has a focus on intercession.

The first half of Rev alludes to the spring feasts of the Jewish year, Pentecost connects with Rev 5.

The Book of Hebrews connects the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary with the ascension of Jesus.

The chapter lacks judgment language, ark, goat, Most Holy Place, so is not Day of Atonement.

Evidence points to the inauguration of the heavenly sanctuary as the focus of the vision, not the Day of Atonement.

Nothing in chapter five is inappropriate to the first century context of Rev.

Rev 6 covers the same historical ground as the Synoptic Apocalypse (Matt 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21).

Through a number of lines of evidence we have established the likely time of Rev 5 as the day of Pentecost, AD 31.

The seven seals are extremely difficult, so it is important, tho difficult, to establish the foundational point.

Rev 5:8B

This verse tells us that the praise of verses 9 and 10 is grounded in the Lamb=s taking of the scroll.

To *fall down* here translates one of the two main Greek words for worship.

The sequence of five hymns in Rev 4-5 is a grand crescendo pointing to the deity of Christ.

The word translated *each* is masculine, as are the elders. The four living creatures are neuter. The elders alone have harps.

The bowls here are of the shallow variety, like saucers today. They are often associated with the sanctuary in the OT.

Incense naturally rises, hence it is a fitting symbol of prayer. In this text prayer is associated only with God=s people on earth.

The grammar of the verse connects prayers with the bowls rather than the incense, but is probably a grammatical error.

The saints mentioned here are God=s people on earth, the invisible church.

Rev 5:9B

This is the first of two *new songs* in Rev, the other is in 14:3. This is sung by heavenly beings, the other by the 144,000.

The concept of a new song echos David=s song of victory in Psalm 144:9.

The present tense of *is singing* may well be a historical present, describing a past vision as if freshly seen.

The word *worthy* occurs four times in the vision (4:11; 5:2, 4, 9). It is the cross that makes the Lamb worthy.

There are three verbs in 5:9-10, *is slain*, *purchased*, *made*, all aorist indicative, points in past time.

The *is slain* and the *purchased* happened at the cross.

Purchased is a better translation than *ransomed* or *redeemed* here, as this is not the normal word for ransom.

The cross is the place where both the slaying of the Lamb and the purchase of His people happens.

The final phrase is partitive, which means some have been purchased from every subdivision of humanity.

Rev 5:10B

Made is a major word for creation in Gen 1, here God turns believers into a kingdom and priests, of highest status on earth.

Kingdom of priests is the fulfillment of God=s promises to Israel (Exod 19:5-6) and Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

If *reign* is a present tense, God=s people rule only where the gospel is embraced.

They will reign looks forward to the time when Jesus= rule over earth becomes literal and tangible.

Rev 5:9-10B

The earlier and better manuscripts leave out *and* so the 24 elders are not including

themselves in the purchase.

A kingdom of priests would be a nation or group that stands between God and all the other nations.

The singers of Rev 5:9-10 are not singing about themselves, but about those on earth who have embraced the cross.

Rev 5:11B

∆And I saw∆ introduces a new aspect to the larger scene, the larger angelic host are now introduced.

The host of angels forms an outer ring around the throne and the 28 nearest the throne.

The number is drawn from Dan 7, but Rev 5 is not the judgment scene portrayed there.

The number 200,000,000 in Rev 9:16 is similar to the number of angels in this verse.

Rev 5:12B

The seven-fold list of praise items in the doxology is introduced by a single article.

The Lamb is powerful enough to rule and rich enough to share (Rev 3:21).

Rev 5:12B

The wisdom and strength of the Lamb both point back to creation.

The Lamb is counted worthy of honor, glory and blessing; He is seen to have the highest level of social value.

3 of the 7 terms in this doxology are applied to King Nebuchadnezzar in Dan 2:37.

Rev 5:13B

The seven-fold doxology of verse 12 is followed by the four-fold doxology of verse 13, but now praising both Father and Son.

Similar universal expressions are found in Exodus 20:11, Psalm 146:6, Philippians 2:10; and Revelation 14:7.

Rev 5:13B

The phrase ∆forever and ever∆ expands the moment of enthronement into the timeless worship of eternity.

∆Under the earth∆ represents both those who have died and the realm where Satan and His angels are confined (Luke 8:31).

This song is linked to the previous by the word ∆blessing.∆ It is the climax of the five songs in Rev 4-5.

Rev 5:14B

The four living creatures get both the first (4:8) and the last word (5:14) in this vision.

The Jesus of the NT has all four qualities that distinguish the one God of Judaism from all other beings.

Rev 4-5 (Summary and Conclusion)B

Chap. 4 not only sets the stage for chap. 5, to some degree it introduces the rest of the

visions of the book.

This scene portrays both the royal and the priestly roles of Jesus Christ in heavenly places.

This vision tells us that the cross is the central event of all history.