

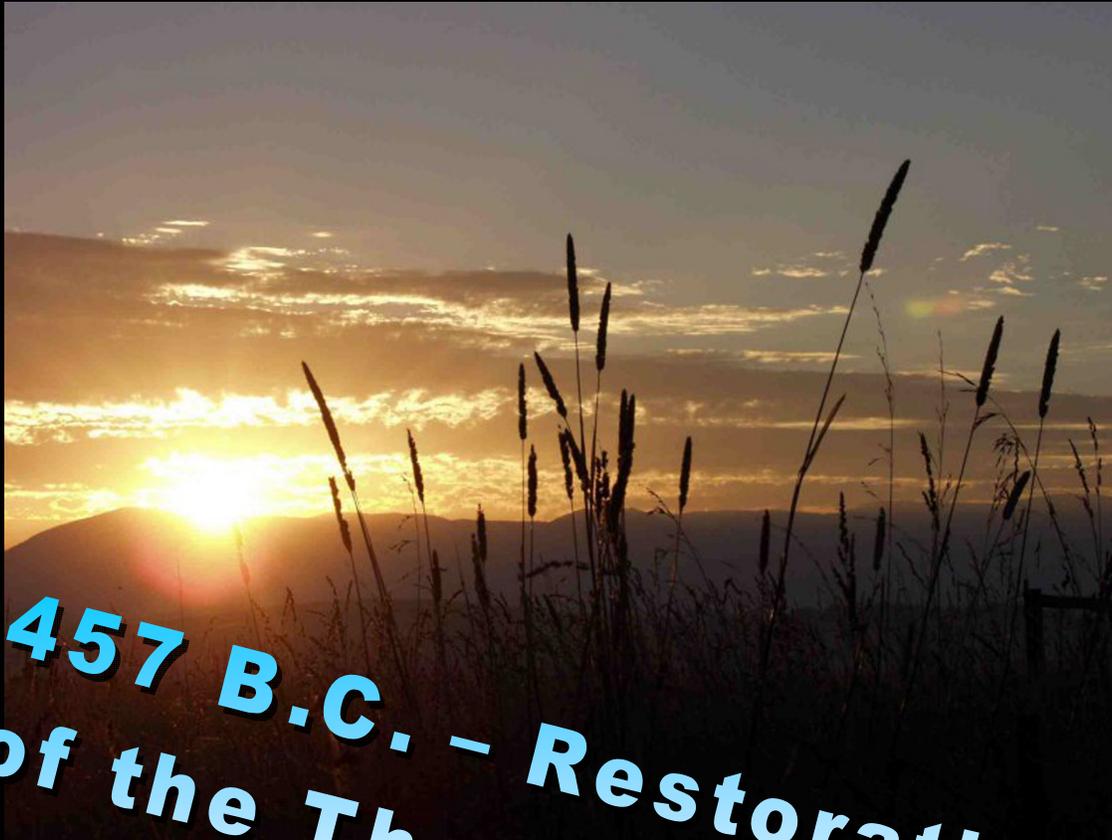
EndTime Issues ...

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE – MINISTERS, TEACHERS, BIBLE STUDENTS

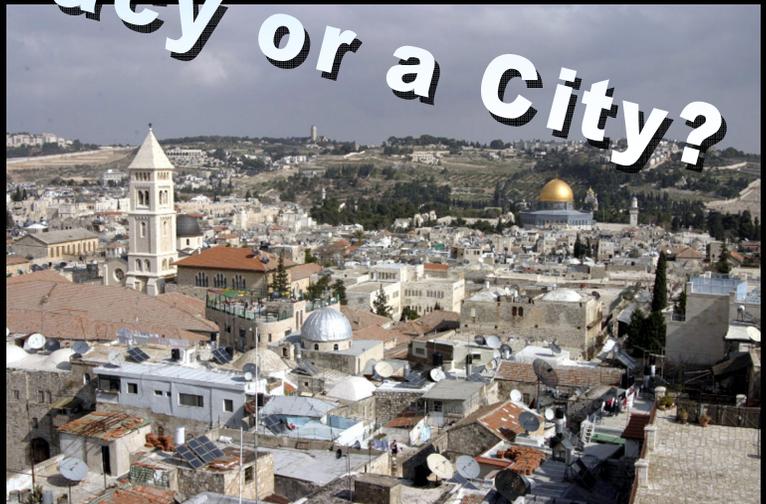
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**457 B.C. – Restoration
of the Theocracy or a City?**



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EndTime Issues... Magazine

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Manuscripts are welcomed for consideration. They should relate to end-time events that have recently been occurred to a clearer view of prophetic truth or have a deep spiritual concern, be simply written and well documented with a focused interest to Christians. Length should be limited to 10 double-spaced pages. The ongoing appeal: "Issues of concern to the last generation."

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What “Issue” Begins Daniel’s 490-Year Prophecy?

- The decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem – the city
- The decree to restore Jerusalem – the people

Introduction

The determination of the onset date for Daniel’s 70-week prophecy remains a disputed concern within the Christian world because the issue for the decree has captured the minds of literalists.

- The pivotal verse is Daniel 9:25.
“Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

Daniel (and his readers) are to **know** and **understand** what Gabriel is saying.

- This is a follow-up to verse 23: “therefore **understand** the matter, and consider the vision” and Gabriel’s promise that he would understand (“I am now come forth **to give thee skill and understanding**” – vs 22).
- The word for “vision” here is *mareh*.
- When all of the *mareh* messages are linked together in Daniel 8–10 and 12, a beautiful theme unfolds.

- It is a story of God’s covenant restoration of man –
- In contradistinction to the word *chazown* (vision), which in Daniel 8–12 describes Satan’s opposition to God’s restoration.

Though Daniel struggled cognitively and emotionally over the messages of chapters 8–12, he specifically said he finally understood the *mareh* vision in 10:1.

- What is Daniel and his reader to know?
- The first item in 9:25 is the beginning point – “from” – 70 weeks of years.
- This is a key to understanding this prophecy and the onset of the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14 – a *mareh* vision also! An important link to understand.

Why study this verse regarding a commandment of restoration?

1. God said we should understand it.
2. There is no such decree or proclamation in the Bible regarding the physical city.
3. Opinion in the religious world is diverse – most Protestants accepting

444 B.C. because of repairing the walls and gates.

- All this means that the years of Christ's anointing, crucifixion, birth and
- The end of the 2300 years will vary, depending on when it begins and maybe **why** it begins!

Many accept 457 B.C. with Artaxerxes I's decree to Ezra – but – no such record exists in the Bible or in archeological finds relative to a geographic place (i.e., the physical city).

- The official Adventist DARCOM Series, vol. 3, p. 65, reading “70 weeks,” Leviticus and Nature of Prophecy Book admits this challenging issue!
- Complicating this is the conclusion of most historical/critical scholars that the 490-year prophecy ended in 164 B.C. tied to:
 - Syrian wars against the Jews
 - And associated with Antiochus Epiphanes IV

The beginning or *terminus a quo* of the seventy “sevens” means everything to advent people.

- Because “times of the end” prophecies are tied directly to this starting point (Daniel 8:17, 19).

Gabriel's First Words

“From the going forth” sets the onset of the sequence in Gabriel's message.

- “Going forth” is a Hebrew word (*mosa*) [mowtsa].
- It refers to “issuing” or “going forth” – a commandment.
- Thus, there is a **source** and **a time** it goes out and an **objective** (to be defined).

He then says what goes out is an order to restore and rebuild.

- The word for this order is *dabar*.
- It is interpreted in a variety of ways in different translations.
 - Commandment (KJV), command
 - Decree (NASB)
 - Word (Hebrew)
 - KJV translates it 80 different ways.¹

Thus, at a point in time, some restoration/rebuild decree will be made on behalf of God's people.

- The decree involves restoration and building of Jerusalem.
- Building of the street (singular) – presumably of Jerusalem (literal – “plaza” or “moat”)
- Building of the wall – presumably of Jerusalem

There is a very important question that must be introduced here and then answered:

- Are the words “Jerusalem,” “street,” “walls,” “plaza” or “moat” referring to *literal* structures or
- Are they symbols of a *spiritual* restoration tied to the same words?

The Restorer – Decree One

Approximately 150 years before (690 B.C.) Isaiah prophesied of Cyrus:

“Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I *am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and

¹ Harris, R. Laird; *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 399.

maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise [men] backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; **that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:** That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: **That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid” (Isaiah 44:24-28).**

“Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus ... I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: **he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives,** not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts” (Isaiah 45:1a,13).

God specifically called Cyrus by *endearing* names before he was born.

- He would be the one to lay the foundation for the temple.
- He would begin to rebuild Jerusalem to be inhabited.

Cyrus the Medo-Persian general and its king (Cyrus the Great, also called Cyrus II):

- Defeated the Babylonian Empire
- Was told of the ancient prophecies of what he would do by Daniel
- Decreed in 538/537 in his first year to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:2-4, II Chronicles 36:22-23).

The Cyrus Decree

The key record of Cyrus’ decree is mainly Biblical – some scholars claim the “Cyrus Cylinder” also support this – but that’s vague.

- In the Biblical recorded decree, only the temple is noted.

- Yet, God had said that Cyrus would initiate the process of rebuilding the city related to it:
 - Being inhabited
 - Even other cities in Judah “shall be built” (Isaiah 44:26)

The following year (536 B.C.) 50,000 Jewish exiles made their trek back to Jerusalem.

- Tied to this time, Daniel recorded a most unique thought as he studied the prophecies of Jeremiah and the 70-year Babylonian captivity prophecy.
- He said that he understood those messages, the “number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord (*dabar* – YHWH) came to Jeremiah the prophet” – then this key phrase: “that He would accomplish seventy years in desolation of Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:2).

Desolation refers to the utter decimation or destruction of Jerusalem, the City.

- It suggests that at the end of the 70 literal years of Babylonian captivity
- The desolation issue would be addressed
- The city would become inhabitable once again
- The center of worship (temple) would become a reality

Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel (Sheshbazzar) – “the prince of Judah” (Ezra 1:8) as governor of the company and Joshua, the high priest, to work with him.

- It is not known when the Jewish people began this journey.
- It likely took 4-5 months (Ezra 7:9).

It is important to note that the people began to settle in the cities before the work of the

temple began – presumably, this included Jerusalem.

“And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel **were in the cities**, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the LORD, *even* burnt offerings morning and evening. They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as *it is* written, ... From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. **But the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.**” (Ezra 3:1, 3, 4a, 6).

Since they “were in the cities,” it is clear that they had **first** addressed their places to live:

- Since the feasts were based upon a sacred calendar
- Since the seventh month was sacred (three feasts occurred then – the last being Tabernacles)
- Their assembling “as one man” on Tishri 1 is significant

Do we have additional information that they inhabited the cities first?

- Haggai 1:11 tells us.
- The foundation for the temple was laid, but the construction was stopped.

“Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying, *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses*, and this house *lie waste*? ... Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.... *Why?* saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is waste*, and **ye run every man unto his own house**” (Haggai 1:3-4, 7, 9b).

Though not specific in Cyrus’ recorded decree, he clearly meant the Jewish people to rebuild and restore as prophesied by God their homes and the temple.

- Does that mean 538-537 B.C. is when Daniel 9:25 is to be attributed?
- Daniel 9:25 states a specific **word** or decree would be issued to **restore** and **build** Jerusalem.
- What might *that* be?
- There must be something else important that is yet to be discovered.

The Darius Decree

Cyrus reigned for eight years (538-530 B.C.), then his son Cambyses II (529-522 B.C.), followed by six months of Psuedo-Smerdis (Guamata) (521 B.C.), then Darius I (The Great) (521-486 B.C.).

- The Bible says from Cyrus to Darius, the enemies of Judah and Benjamin, hired counselors against them to frustrate their plans (Ezra 4:5).
- A letter was written to Darius complaining about the Jewish temple activity – “it is not finished” (Ezra 6:16).

Darius wrote back confirming Cyrus’ decree and ordered: “Let the work of this house of God alone” (Ezra 6:7).

- Provision for tax money to go to the project was made.
- Provision for sacrificial animals was ordered by the provincial governors. “I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed” (Ezra 6:12b).

The house was finished during the sixth year of Darius.

Approximately 23 years after the exiles first left Babylon, the temple was completed (Ezra 6:15).

- Nothing in Darius I's decree meets the fulfillment of Daniel 9:25.

Times of Pathos over God's People

During the second year of Darius' reign, Zechariah was given amazing visions and messages from God.

- "Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto thee" (Zechariah 1:3).
- "Turn ye now from your evil ways."

Then the "angel of the Lord" asked the "Lord of hosts" a question:

- "How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah?" (Zechariah 1:12).
- The "Lord of host" answered, "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy" (Zechariah 1:14).
- "The Lord shall yet comfort Zion and shall yet choose Jerusalem" (Zechariah 1:17; cf. 2:12).

This is a distinct change in messages regarding God's people.

- Jerusalem is a metaphor for His people.
- He will judge and restore it spiritually again.
- The jealousy for Zion (God's dwelling place with His people) and Jerusalem (His people) represent a spiritual restoration totally unrelated to buildings, walls and streets.

This is further emphasized by the story of Joshua (the high priest), Satan and the Angel of the Lord:

- "I will clothe thee with a change of raiment" (Zechariah 3:4).
- "All who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness will stand be-

fore Him as chosen and faithful and true. Satan has no power to pluck them out of the hand of the Saviour. Not one soul who in penitence and faith has claimed His protection will Christ permit to pass under the enemy's power. His word is pledged: 'Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me.' Isaiah 27:5."²

- "As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments,' and the encouraging words are spoken, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' Zechariah 3:4. The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. A 'fair miter' is set upon their heads."³
- At a time when the cities were being restored and the temple foundation laid, God's next message related to spiritual restoration and rebuilding.

Also, the entire imagery of spiritual restoration is seen in Daniel's prayer before he is approached by Gabriel (Daniel 9:4-19).

² White, Ellen G.; *Prophets and Kings*, p. 587.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 591.

- Since Gabriel came in response to this prayer
- The prayer needs deeper examination

The desolation of the land and the bondage of the people related to their rebellion against the Sabbatical year (II Chronicles 36:21).

- That symbolized a time when everyone was “one” (just like in the heavenly Canaan).
- The land belonged to God.
- During this year, the land and people rested from all distractions, labor and secular activity.
- The focus was the “Lord of host.”

Now – with their apostasy having been punished, what must be changed?

- Did Israel need walls, streets and buildings?
- They needed the Lord.
- They needed a true spiritual revival and a setting to once again worship.

As Daniel’s prayer progresses, he sees the spiritual restoration as paramount.

- “Thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain” (vss 16-17)
- “Thy city which is called by thy name” (vs 18)
- “Thy city and thy people are called by thy name” (vs 19)
- “Supplication ... in behalf of the holy mountain (vs 20) of my God”

In verses 11-14 “us” represents “Jerusalem.”

The Spiritual Decree!

Approximately 73 years after Zerubbabel and Joshua brought back to Judah the first wave of Jewish people:

- Artaxerxes I (Longimanus) came to the throne
- This was the era of Ezra and Nehemiah

Artaxerxes was acquainted with these men and “talked freely regarding the power of the God of heaven and the divine purpose in restoring the Jews to Jerusalem.”⁴

- Artaxerxes I gave a third decree (Ezra 7:12-28).
- There is **nothing** in it that articulates buildings, streets or walls.
- It is a beautiful invitation and directive to **reestablish the theocracy in Jerusalem.**

“Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?” (Ezra 7:23).

This decree and Ezra’s leadership led to a great revival in Israel.

- This decree was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:7).
- Nehemiah, a contemporary of Ezra (Nehemiah 8:1, 9),
- Noted the year was calculated as a fall-to-fall period (Nehemiah 1:1, 2:1).

From archeological and astronomical data, Artaxerxes came to power in the fall of 464 B.C.

- His seventh year would be 458-457 B.C.

Once revival was underway:

- Ezra went about dealing with ruins still obvious in Jerusalem (Ezra 4:11-16).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 608.

- It was during this time that the western governors of the empire wrote to Artaxerxes.
 - That “they are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city; they are finishing the walls and repairing the foundations” (vs 12).
 - Then, impulsively, Artaxerxes decreed that this city not be rebuild (vs 21) “until a decree is made by me.”
- This clearly reveals that the original decree in 457 B.C. did **not** include building the city structure!

This rebuilding was likely 456 B.C.

- BUT – that is not the issue in Gabriel’s prophecy.
- The restoration of Jerusalem is the reestablishment of the theocracy of God’s people (commensurate with Daniel’s prayer) (“to build” (*banah*) can refer to the restoration of God’s people (Jeremiah 12:14-16).

What is the street (plaza) and wall (moat)?

- The wall (moat) is symbolic for something firmly decided (cf. Isaiah 10:23).
- The street (plaza or square) refers to the center of the city. This suggests that all the people of God will have firmly decided for Him – the center of their loyalty.

The damage later against the walls and gate by the Samaritans led Nehemiah, cup-bearer of Artaxerxes I, to go to Jerusalem to repair the wall and gates (Nehemiah 1:3, 2:3). The work only took 52 days to complete. The restoration of the city itself was not his object.

Conclusion

The “word” or “decree” to restore or build Jerusalem refers exclusively to the restoration of God’s people once again into a theocratic state. Artaxerxes I’s decree, recorded in Ezra 7, meets those exact specifications.

Josephus notes that the year 457 B.C. was a Jubilee year. That would have deep spiritual significance for God’s people. It was then that land was restored to the rightful owners. Slaves were set free. That represents the ultimate release, restoration and freedom. It was in that year that Artaxerxes gave his decree.

This all coincides with the great *mareh* restoration message in Daniel when holiness will be adjudicated, God’s character vindicated.

Franklin S. Fowler Jr., M.D.



Prophecy Unfolds

The Seven Seals of Revelation

Commentary on Revelation 5:6-14

Chapter 8

The Worthy “Bleeding” Lamb

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

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.”

“In the midst of the images of Ezekiel’s living beings and Isaiah’s elders stands a Lamb ‘as slain.’ That the Lamb stands ‘in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and ... of the elders’ could suggest [at first] that he is on the throne and surrounded by the cherubim and elders. However, ‘in the midst of the throne’ ... more likely refers generally in figurative manner (by synecdoche) to the inner court area around the throne. That the Lamb stands somewhere in the area around the throne instead of on the throne itself is apparent from the fact that v 7 portrays the Lamb making an approach to the throne.... In 5:6 it appears that the Lamb is near the throne, preparing to make his approach to [the throne].”⁵

Verse 6 – “stood a Lamb as it had been slain.”

John the Baptist first used the designation of a “Lamb” for Christ (John 1:29: “Behold the Lamb of God”). John identified Him as “the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet” (4:1) as the Being inviting him into the throne room. Suddenly, the Lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5) is seen as a Lamb. This opens new imagery in this book. This *crucified* Messiah, the Lamb slain, still pleading His blood, gives the Son of God special authority, and will justify His final work and heavenly actions as the apocalyptic story unfolds.

⁵ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 350.

From this point on, the culminating steps in man's salvic history will be revealed. Remarkable activity is to be set in motion to terminate evil. Every event will unswervingly point toward the vindication of God's character. The Lion and the Lamb will blend typological forces. *Final invitations to repent will be offered.* Doors will be opened to the faithful. The Son of God will rip away barriers to God's wrath against satanic strongholds. Step by step events will prepare for the grand arrival of Jesus as King of kings. But now God has been waiting for the Lamb to approach Him and take the scroll. *That will mark the beginning of the very end* – the onset of the “appointed time” (Daniel 8:19, Habakkuk 2:2-3).

“An important interpretive issue here is the problem of why the Lamb, who has not been seen by John before, suddenly appears on the scene. It could simply be for dramatic purposes, just as the scroll in the right hand of the One seated on the throne is not mentioned in Revelation 4 but is suddenly the focus of attention in 5:1.”⁶ As each Seal is broken, it will be apparent: “it is time.”

In the Daniel 7 motif when a courtroom judgment review began, it noted shortly in Daniel 7:13 that Jesus, the “Son of man came ... to the Ancient of Days.” That means They had been separated. In our discussion of Revelation 4, there was a time in the 1844 period alluded to when God had moved into the Most Holy place; Jesus then led His remnant people “out” from the Holy Place to wait. And then He “came to” the Ancient of Days. That was the termination activity of the 2300 years, which stated that a signified judicial work preparatory to the end of time. We are about to see Jesus *once again*, in an apocalyptic setting “coming to” the Father to prepare for the final judicial work just prior to His second coming.

“A slain lamb is perfectly appropriate to the intended paradox. On one hand, the elder has described this Being as the lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5), depicting supreme power. On the other, His appearance is that of ‘a lamb standing as having been slain,’ which speaks of supreme self-sacrifice (Swete). These figures draw attention to the unique characteristics combined in the life of Christ. His supreme self-sacrifice leads to His supreme power, so there is no contradiction between the two (Charles).”⁷

The wound identifies Jesus as the *sacrificial* lamb, the “faithful martyr” (1:5). Yet He is *standing* near the Father at the center of the universe as one who has prevailed and conquered. Now He is seen as the lamb ruler or leader.⁸

“In addition to the resurrection, the defeat of death was itself ironically a victory for Christ. That is, Christ as a Lion overcame by being slaughtered as a Lamb, which is the critical event in Chapter 5.

“Consequently, the Lion conquers initially by suffering as a slain lamb. This juxtaposition implies that, in their struggle against the world, believers should remember that Christ also suffered at the hands of the world but triumphed over it. His destiny is to be theirs, if they persevere.

“But how is the paradox of ‘conquering through suffering’ to be understood more precisely? In the light of how believers overcome according to the letters, we can say that Christ himself overcame by maintaining His loyalty to the Father through suffering and finally death (cf. 1:5). He was physically defeated but spiritually victorious. He willingly submitted to the unjust penalty of death, which was imposed on him ultimately by the devil. As an innocent victim he became a representative penal substitute for the sins of his people. While he was suffering the defeat of death, he was also overcoming by creating a kingdom of redeemed subjects over whom he would reign and over whom the devil would no longer have power. This is indicated by 5:9-10, which views the Lamb's redemption and creation of a kingdom as a basis for his worthiness. Therefore, while Jesus was being defeated at the Cross, he was nevertheless beginning to establish his kingdom.

“This does not mean that the Lamb's resurrection is not conceived of as a victory but only that there is an intention to highlight the death as a victory.”⁹

⁶ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 351.

⁷ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 391.

⁸ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 352.

⁹ Beale, *Op. cit.*, pp. 353-355.

He is described by John “as if it had been slain.” Though suggesting “tentativeness” in his understanding it is simply descriptive of a lamb that is fully functional, still pleading His blood. Thus, he witnessed the resurrected Lamb that is about to play out a judgment scene as if a lion. Though “slain” he stands to live forever (Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 9:23-28).

“John probably sees the Lamb with His death wound still bleeding, as a lamb slain for sacrifice in the sanctuary service. The word ‘as’ indicates that this is a symbol. John is not saying that a slaughtered lamb really stands before the throne of God in heaven. Rather, he is describing what he sees in symbolic vision. Since this is apparently true of the Lamb, it follows that other features of this vision, the seven lamps (ch 4:5), the four living creatures (ch. 4:6), and the book (ch. 5:1) are also symbolic (see on Eze 1:10; Rev 4:1). The form of the verb translated ‘had been slain’ implies that the act of slaughter had taken place in the past, and that its results remained. Thus, though Christ’s death is historically in the past, its results for mankind are ever fresh and availing.”¹⁰

“Christ is our Mediator and officiating High Priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a Lamb that had been slain, as in the very act of pouring out His blood in the sinner’s behalf. When the law of God is set before the sinner, showing him the depth of his sins, he should then be pointed to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. He should be taught repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will the labor of Christ’s representative be in harmony with His work in the heavenly sanctuary.”¹¹

The imagery goes deeper and is profound. Jesus, the Lamb slain, is still our advocate: “The infinite sufficiency of Christ is demonstrated by His bearing the sins of the whole world. He occupies the double position of offerer and offering, of priest and of victim.”¹²

“While it is true that a slaughtered lamb obviously connoted sacrifice, the lamb in John’s vision is now standing upright, having ‘seven horns and seven eyes’ – symbols of perfect power and wisdom. The Lamb of Revelation is the ‘Lord of lords, and King of kings,’ who wages a victorious warfare against the beast and his confederates (17:12-14) and before whose wrath the inhabitants of earth call upon the rocks and mountains to fall on them (6:15-17).”¹³

Verse 6 – “having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.”

In a sweeping phrase the messianic Lamb bears the divine qualities of complete power (seven horns – omnipotence), full knowledge (seven eyes – omniscience) and is ever present (seven Spirits acting on His behalf – omnipresence).

At this point we can see the qualities that characterized His worthiness which one of the elders addressed. This imagery places Jesus in His full divine role, ready to begin the first end-time scene with the opening of Seal one. A final phase in the great controversy with sin is about to commence.

Lion	Powerful, will destroy his enemies, justice will be given to those who do not accept His justice
Lamb	Has spirit of mercy, grace and gentleness toward those who accept His sacrifice
Mortal Wound	Sin keeps it always open and bleeding. That blood is still available for the repentant sinner.
Standing	Alive, resurrected, functioning
Horns	Omnipotent

¹⁰ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 772.

¹¹ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 4, p. 395.

¹² White, Ellen G.; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 105.

¹³ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

Eyes Omniscience
Eyes Omnipresent through his Spirit

“That the Lamb has *horns* is best explained against the background of the Jewish tradition found in *1 En 90* and *Test. Jos. 19* concerning a conquering messianic lamb (though some see the latter text as a Christian interpolation). Yet even these two Jewish texts find their primary inspiration from Daniel. The relation of the horns to ... (‘overcome’) and to the OT allusions to the conquering of the Messiah in v 5 provide a basis for viewing them as a continuation of the ‘messianic conqueror’ idea from v 5 (for ‘horns’ as representing power cf. Deut 33:17; 1 Kgs 22:11; Ps 89:17; Dan 7:7-8:24; *1 En. 90:6-12, 37*). That the Lamb has *seven* horns signifies the fullness of his strength, since ‘seven’ is figurative for fullness elsewhere in the Apocalypse and in biblical literature.

“The slain Lamb thus represents the image of a conqueror who was mortally wounded while defeating an enemy. Christ’s death, the end-time sacrifice of the messianic Lamb, becomes interpreted as a sacrifice that not only redeems but also conquers. The idea of conquering is evoked by Genesis 49, Isaiah 11, and the ‘horns’ of the lamb.

“The consensus is that the last phrase of v 6 (‘having seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God having been sent out into all the earth’) is dependent on Zechariah 3 and 4. In Zech 3:9 the ‘seven eyes’ are bound up with a divine inscription set before Jesus, the high priest, concerning the ‘removal of iniquity of the land in one day.’ In Zechariah 4 the symbols of the ‘seven lamps’ (v 2) and the ‘seven eyes’ (v 10) are associated with Yahweh’s omnipotent Spirit. Indeed, in 2 Chron 16:9 the statement ‘the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth’ highlights not only omniscience but especially divine sovereignty, that he may strongly support those whose heart is completely his.’ The preceding mention of ‘seven horns’ underscores further the notion of omnipotence.

“John has interpreted the ‘seven eyes’ of Zechariah as Yahweh’s Spirit and has identified both eyes and spirits as a possession of the lamb ...

“As a result of the death and resurrection, these spirits also become Christ’s agents throughout the world who figuratively represent the Holy Spirit himself. The Spirit carries out the sovereign plan of the Lord.”¹⁴

He has been supremely qualified to judge and to warn of judgment to come. “The exalted Lord Christ now exercises this supreme authority and power on behalf of God’s people, in particular as he uses this power to defend them on earth, as will be revealed in the prophetic message of chapters 6-16. The ‘seven horns’ (5:6) are a comforting reminder to John that the Lord Christ will defend him and his faithful hearers no matter what they experience and suffer, for he is the ‘horn of [their] salvation’ (Ps 18:2-3 [MT 18:3-4]; cf. I Sam 2:1; Lk 1:69).

“Closely connected with the horns are the ‘seven eyes’ (Rev 5:6), by which the exalted Lamb now knows and sees all things. In Zech 4:10 the seven eyes of Yahweh rove over the whole earth, that is, the Lord (by means of the seven eyes) sees and knows everything. In Zechariah’s vision the seven eyes are symbolized by the lampstand with its seven lamps (4:1-3), and together they represent and symbolize Yahweh’s presence by his Spirit (4:4-6). *But now this authority to oversee everything by the Holy Spirit has been given by God to the Lamb because of his victory.* On behalf of God the Father he now exercises this oversight. John would again be reminded that the Lamb does so on behalf of God’s people for their comfort and faith. This is entailed in Jesus being the ‘light’ of the world (see Jn 1:4; 8:12; 12:35-36, 46). The seven horns and eyes thus demonstrate the close relationship between the triumphant Christ and the Holy Spirit, for in Christ’s exalted status he and the Spirit are inseparable, especially as Christ works with his church on earth through his Word and with the Spirit (Rev 2:1, 7, 11, etc.; cf. Jn 14:17; 20:22; Rev 4:5).”¹⁵

¹⁴ Beale, *Op. cit.*, pp. 351-355.

¹⁵ Brighton, *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

This is gracefully portrayed in these thoughts: “The throne of Satan is in this world. But Christ has said, ‘Where stands the throne of Satan shall stand My cross.’ Satan shall be cast out, and I will become the Center of attraction in the redeemed world. I will engage every holy agency in the universe to cooperate with Me in the plan of salvation. I will summon every heavenly power. Angels that excel in strength shall unite with humanity, sanctified to My service to uproot evil. The depravity of man requires all this expenditure of heavenly power, that man may be sanctified through the grace of God. Jesus said, ‘I will redeem My people from the earth. The perishing shall be rescued.’”¹⁶

There is another deeper meaning to all of God’s children in the Christian dispensation. The metaphor “in the midst” has spiritual implications.

“The Lamb of God is represented before us as ‘in the midst of the throne’ of God. He is the great ordinance by which man and God are united and commune together. Thus men are represented as sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is the appointed place of meeting between God and humanity.

“[John 17:19-23 quoted]. Christ brought human nature into a personal relation with His own divinity. Thus He has given a center for the faith of the universe to fasten upon.”¹⁷

“The Isaiah 53 background highlights the atoning aspect of the lamb’s sacrificial death, as well as applying the metaphors of both ‘root’ (... cf. Isa 52:2 and Rev 5:5) and ‘lamb’ (... LXX) to the sacrificial victim. In fact, ‘root’ occurs also in Isa 11:1, 10, alluded to in Rev 5:5, which may have inspired attraction to the same metaphor in 53:2.”¹⁸

Does this mean we have a simple Passover motif? Impossible. The imagery doesn’t end with the Lamb. That is only a reminder of one function. We have the Lion, the horns and the eyes all wrapped up in this remarkable symbolism of Christ. Together they justify His worthiness to break the Seals and open the scroll.

“All of those elements ... symbolize the necessary qualifications for the Person who would be worthy enough to loose the ‘seals’ and open the ‘book,’ and, in addition, act as both judge (to administer justice like a Lion) and defense attorney (to deal in mercy like a Lamb).”¹⁹

Chapter 9

He Takes “the” Mysterious Scroll

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

Verse 7 – “And he came and took the book”

If the Seals are historical, beginning with the Christian era, why does the Lamb have horns? What purpose would a sealed book serve at the onset of that dispensation? What merit would it serve for the Father to give Christ a book at that time? This must be addressed.

Where did Jesus appear from? Many contend that the imagery of the Holy Place with the seven lamps of fire being burned (4:5) is maintained in chapter 5. Thus Jesus simply had to reach out to the Father to receive the scroll document. Others strongly suggest Jesus came from the Holy

¹⁶ White, Ellen G.; *The Gospel Herald*; 5/1889.

¹⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 124.

¹⁸ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 351.

¹⁹ Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

Place to the Most Holy Place, fulfilling Daniel 7:13. Others believe this is the inauguration scene given Jesus right after He ascended to heaven or possibly even a judgment scene unique to the Seventh-day Adventist 1844 Millerite motif.

Evidence would suggest that the imagery of chapter 5 is not 1844 nor the inauguration scene. Chapter 1 is a final trumpet call to the church leaders. Chapters 2 and 3 are mainly verbal warnings of a judgment to come and promises to the over comers. In chapter 4 we find an absent Jesus visually, but He sounds what appears to be the Shofar trumpet that a Jubilee is about to come. In chapter 5 we find preparation for one of the most solemn and dramatic warnings of the Bible. First, Jesus is in the “midst” of the throne. Then He is seen approaching God to begin a solemn series of terminal events.

In an insightful preamble to the Seven Seals, David Clover makes this observation: “We must first study the Seals, then we can better understand the timing of Revelation 5.”²⁰

It is crucial to correctly understand these issues. Chapters 4 through 11 are a detailed revelation of sets of end-time sequenced events. They detail precise steps God has openly presented regarding what good and evil – God’s people and the lost – will take in their final earthly battle, which will lead to the heavenly victory. It will be readily seen that:

1. The Seals, Trumpets and Plagues are all end-time events.
2. Together, the Seals, Trumpets and Plagues form a series of events that mark the end of earth’s history.
3. The Seals and Trumpets describe in detail the Early Time of Trouble (or Little Time of Trouble) and Jacob’s Trouble (the Great Tribulation alluded to in Daniel 9–12).

“It is my belief that this is not just the outline of Revelation, *but in fact is its story line*. I also believe – and will attempt to show – that this view of Revelation is consistent with the words of Jesus, with the prophetic visions of Ellen White, and with established Seventh-day Adventist eschatology. Some of the events that we believe will transpire, such as the Early Time of Trouble, cannot be definitively supported from Scripture *apart from this view*.”²¹

It is crucial to understand: If the sealed book was the record that the investigative judgment was based on (as many contend), the record would have to have been opened before the Seals were broken since those Seals represent the time period when God’s people are sealed and Jesus comes. Daniel 7:13 describes Jesus coming to the Ancient of Days.

“The *coming* of Christ [there] described [in Daniel 7:13] is not His second coming to the earth. He *comes* to the Ancient of Days in heaven to receive dominion and glory and a kingdom, which will be given Him *at the close of His work as a mediator*. It is this *coming*, and not His second advent to the earth, that was foretold in prophecy to take place at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844. Attended by heavenly angels, our great High Priest *enters the holy of holies* and there appears in the presence of God to engage in the last acts of His ministration in behalf of man – to perform the work of *investigative judgment* and to make an atonement for all who are shown to be entitled to its benefits.”²²

Is this ‘coming’ the same as in Revelation 5:7? What book is used in the Investigative Judgment? Note the following supportive positions in these questions:

“When we become children of God, our *names* are written in the *Lamb’s book of life*, and they remain there until the time of the investigative judgment. Then the name of every individual will be called, and his record examined, by Him who declares, ‘I know thy works.’ If in that day it shall ap-

²⁰ Clover, *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 479-480.

pear that all our wicked deeds have not been fully repented of, our names will be blotted from the book of life, and our sins will stand against us.”²³

“The book of life contains the names of all who have ever entered the service of God. Jesus bade His disciples, ‘Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.’ Luke 10:20. Paul speaks of his faithful fellow workers, ‘Whose *names* are in the book of life.’ Phil. 4:3....

“A book of remembrance’ is written before God, in which are recorded the *good deeds* of ‘them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.’ Mal 3:16. Their words of faith, their acts of love, are registered in heaven.”²⁴

The scroll that Jesus takes is a different book than the Book of Life. The Book of Life is to be reviewed and decisions are to be made as to whose names will be retained. It will be seen that this seven-sealed document cannot be opened until after the second coming. It is a history of all the evil and good deeds of the nations and individuals **and their destiny**. This book is not opened until Revelation 20:11-12! That book, written by God, defines how the execution of earth’s final events will be played out and the destiny of those in apostasy.

In Daniel 7:9-10 God is set down ready for judgment and opens the book before Jesus comes to the throne (vs 13). That describes the judgment of those who claim to be His. Here in Revelation Jesus opens the scroll when the deeds of the wicked are to be judged – after Jesus comes.

“In the great day of *final atonement* and *investigative judgment*, the **only** cases considered are those of the professed people of God. The judgment of the wicked is a **distinct** and **separate work**, and takes place at a later period.”²⁵

“This roll was written within and without. John says: ‘I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon’ [verse 4]. The vision as presented to John made its impression upon his mind. The destiny of every nation was contained in that book. John was distressed at the utter inability of any human being or angelic intelligence to read the words, or even to look thereon. His soul was wrought up to such a point of agony and suspense that one of the strong angels had compassion on him, and laying his hand on him assuringly, said, ‘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’ [verse 5].”²⁶

As the Seals are opened, they begin to reveal the players in the end-time conflict. Then the Trumpets begin to sound (Feast of Trumpets) after the fifth Seal is broken. That will be the final call for those yet in Babylon to come out and repent. The urgency shows the *final* Day of Atonement is about to occur, which will eternally seal man’s destiny.

Verse 7 – “out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.”

This is the first step in preparation for the onset of the executive judgment. There is no imagery to the enthronement or inauguration of Jesus. “John avoids depicting this act as of investiture or lordship as coronation.”²⁷

The exegetic ties to Daniel 7–9 are incomplete. There we see both Revelation 5 and 20 imagery, where four distinct salvic phases are mentioned: investigative judgment, executive judgment, vindictive judgment and destructive judgment.

²³ White, Ellen G.; *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 987.

²⁴ White, Ellen G.; *The Faith I Live By*, p. 210.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ White, Ellen G.; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, pp. 296-297.

²⁷ Roloff, Jurgen; *The Revelation of John – A Continental Commentary*, (Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN), p. 80.

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.”

Verse 8 – “And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb,”

“The instantaneous adoration of the heavenly court underscores the significance of the Lamb’s action in taking the scroll from God. This verse introduces a section consisting of vv 8-12, which, more than any other passage in Revelation (or in the NT generally), centers on the worship of Christ as the Lamb (Swete, 127; Bauckham, ‘The Worship of Jesus,’ 118-49) [*but*] there are several scenes of worship in which the initial action involves falling down before God and worshiping him (using the two verbs ... but always varying somewhat in phraseology (4:10; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4). Rev 5:8, however, is the only scene in Revelation in which members of the heavenly court fall down before the Lamb ... [linguistically] suggesting a degree of subordination (Beskow, *Rex Gloriae*, 140-21).”²⁸ The Lamb is assuming a new and vital role in the heavenly courts.

“The falling down ... of these angelic beings depicts the awful solemnity of the occasion (Smith, *Revelation*, p. 114). In 4:10, the 24 elders fall before the one [before] ... the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever. In 5:14, only the elders fall in worship. In 7:11, all the angels fall before the throne on their faces and worship God. In 11:16, the 24 fall upon their faces before God and worship Him. In 19:4, the 24 and the four living beings fall and worship God who sits upon the throne.”²⁹

Thomas captures the essence of this event: “His taking of the scroll marks the initiation of proceedings to convert its contents into reality and eventually usher in the promised kingdom.”³⁰ That is profound. A great transition in time is occurring!

Many commentators state that Jesus now takes the throne. There is absolutely no indication that this occurs. He is not ready to do so. In a few moments John tells us that the 24 elders will be presenting the prayers of the saints to Him. Jesus is performing a priestly function (as are the elders). *But He is about to bring about another event, the activation of man’s final destiny.* Others contend that no priestly function is in evidence in this scene. The imagery is full of priestly functions as we shall see.

In the previous scene we have the heavenly beings worshiping God in the setting of seven golden candlesticks. Here, the candlesticks are not mentioned (the seven spirits they symbolized are now represented as being on Jesus). God is still on His throne, but now Jesus the Lamb is seen with the full expression of the Spirit in full review. He approaches the Father to obtain the Book of Destiny, a record of what is about to occur to nations, individuals, religions and groups. He is preparing for the termination of earth’s history and vindication of God’s judgment. The angels and those beings of the court are anxious for the destiny of all to be completed. That would herald the end of the conflict.

“So, with the perspective that these heavenly hosts had been waiting nearly 2,000 years for this event, and at the same time wondering how God’s name could possibly be vindicated, it is not difficult to understand why they exhibit such joy and acclamation when the Lamb at last steps forward to take ‘the book.’

“Consider also their frustration when the ‘Most Holy’ place COULD have been anointed at the end of the ‘seventy weeks’ or only three and a half years after the crucifixion (see the last part of Dan 9:24) had the Jewish nation fully accepted the Messiah. Therefore, the 2,000 years of addi-

²⁸ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 355.

²⁹ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 395.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 395.

tional waiting time, which included the 1260 years of the Dark ages, must have been excruciating.”³¹

Verse 8 – “having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.”

“They have ‘harps’, which are the ‘lyres’ used for the older psalmody (cf., e.g., Pss 33:2; 98:5) but will now be used for the ‘new song’ of praise to the Lamb (v. 9; 15:2-3).”³²

It was the lyre that was used to accompany singing and not harps, per se. This was a smaller instrument than the harp and was easily used to accompany cultic songs. The *Kithara* or lute anciently was a triangular shape, with seven strings, afterwards increased to eleven.³³

“It also is regularly connected with prophecy (cf 1 Sam 10:5, 1 Chron 25:3; Ps 49:4). More than any other musical instrument, the harp is employed in Scripture in direct praise and worship of God (Scott). Later in the Apocalypse, it is used to describe celestial music in 14:2 and 15:2 (Swete; Ladd).”³⁴

Most scholars conclude that the etymological structure refers to only the elders having the “harps” and “bowls.” “The elders are those holding harps and bowls and sing the new song in vv 9-10. The living beings do not do so since ... (‘having,’ masculine plural participle) has its antecedent in ... (‘the twenty-four elders’) and ... (‘the four living beings,’ neuter plural), although John does not always follow the standard rules of concord. That only the twenty-four elders have this role is evident from the fact that they are partially modeled on the twenty-four orders of Levites, who were commissioned to ‘prophesy in giving thanks and praising the Lord’ by ‘singing’ to the accompaniment of ‘lyres, harps, and cymbals’ (1 Chron 25:6-31; see above on 4:4).”³⁵

Why did the 24 elders have 24 bowls of incense? In the Old Testament incense was burned at the Altar of Incense in a small golden cup or bowl (some reference two cups). On the Day of Atonement the High Priest carried a golden censor or bowl filled with incense from that altar into the Most Holy Place before the mercy seat.

“The word ... usually translated ‘bowl’ (RSV; NRSV; REB; NIV; Louw-Nida, § 6.124), must be understood in this context as *a cultic utensil* and is therefore translated ‘bowl used in offerings’ by BAGD, 858, and *Opferschale*, ‘offering dish,’ by Bauser-Aland, 1771. The term ... occurs twelve times in Revelation (5:8; 15:7; 16:1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 17; 17:1; 21:9). The meaning ... in 5:8, however, appears to be slightly different from the meaning ... in the other eleven references.”³⁶

In Old Testament worship the offering of incense was the prerogative of the priest (cf. Numbers 16:6-7) (Ford).³⁷

This would mean the 24 elders fulfill the repeated promise that the redeemed will be kings *and* priests (1:6). Clearly we have shown here a mediation role for the saints. If these elders are bringing to Jesus prayers, they must be of some urgency. We see an allusion to urgent prayers under the fifth Seal. If all heaven is astir to get the scroll open to bring the world to an end, something of a vast magnitude must be occurring.

Did God just write the book at the time of the vision scene? Evidence suggests, because it was sealed, it has been there from ages past. Why now the urgency to get it *opened*? There is only one conclusion that can be drawn – the time of the end has come! Heaven is eager for the final scenes to be enacted so that judgment can be executed. Breaking the Seals causes many of the closing scenes to be enacted. Thus, we have those surrounding the throne encouraging Jesus to take the scroll, open the Seals, and deal with the special prayers of the saints.

³¹ Wood, *Op. cit.*s, p. 10.

³² Gaebelain, *Op. cit.*, p. 469.

³³ Vincent, *Op. cit.*, p. 490; cf. 1 Cor 14:7; Rev 14:2; 15:2.

³⁴ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 396.

³⁵ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 357.

³⁶ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 356.

³⁷ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 396.

There is stunning “celebration liturgy” written relating to this scene. It is true there is awe and solemn praise going to Jesus, but the context is far more. Those heavenly beings are saying to Jesus, “You are worthy to move the final stages of the sin conflict to its end.”

“The grounds are better for seeing them as specific prayers of saints from this future time of trial – prayers that seek the sending forth of judgment and the inauguration of Christ’s kingdom (cf. Luke 18:7-8). The connection of similar prayers with the vindication of martyrs of this future time in 8:3-5 argues for such specificity. A reference to the coming reign of the saints in 5:10 lends support from the immediate context (Johnson). In 6:10, the martyrs petition God for His judgment on their murderers. This adds to the case for restricting these prayers to specific goals of vindication (Johnson).

“The Apocalypse describes a witnessing company of saints on earth during the apocalyptic outpouring of wrath (cf. 12:17; 13:7-10) who will be objects of the beast’s persecution. These will be the ones who cry out to God for vindication after their martyrdom (Scott). The symbol of their prayers in this scene, preparatory to the opening of the seven seals, furnishes a hint as to the part these prayers will play once the period symbolized by the seals begins.”³⁸

Since there are odors that come from the incense in the bowls (vials) they are passionately active prayers going heavenward in the setting just before the Seals are broken. The “beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8) has started. The Tribulation is about to begin.

“The saints’ prayers are to be identified with those of 6:9-11 and 8:4ff., which call for divine vindication ... and which are both directly linked to judgment of the ungodly. Therefore, the prayers mentioned here are not just praises but especially requests that God defend the honor of his reputation for justice by judging the persecutors of his people. This is a further indication of the pastoral concern for suffering behind the apparently lofty theophanic theology of ch 4. The position and work of Christ mentioned in 5:9-13 must also be relevant to this pastoral concern because of the immediate link of the ‘new song’ of v 9a with ‘the prayers of the saints’ of v 8b.”³⁹

“Let the members of every family bear in mind that they are closely allied to heaven. The Lord has a special interest in the families of His children here below. *Angels* offer the smoke of the fragrant incense for the praying saints.”⁴⁰

Here the 24 elders have the vials of incense. This is the last time the 24 elders will be depicted as holding incense vials. A typological change will come with these into a single golden censer.⁴¹

These prayers raise a paradox, which is reviewed in the next verse.

“‘The bowls full of incense’ *represent the ‘prayers of the saints’ (8:3-4). Prayer (proseuche)* in this scene is not praise but petition. Why would John mention the saints on earth as petitioning God? In 6:10 the martyrs are seen as calling to God for his judgment on those who killed them, and in 8:3-4 the prayers of the saints are immediately connected with the trumpets of God’s judgment. And since v 10 refers to the coming kingdom, it may be that the prayers are petitions for God to judge the world and to extend his kingdom throughout the earth (Luke 18:7-8). ‘Saints’ here, as elsewhere in the NT and the rest of Revelation, is simply the normal term for the rank and file of Christians, i.e., those set apart for God’s purposes (2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Rev 11:18; 13:7, 19; 19:8; 22:21).”⁴²

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

³⁹ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 357.

⁴⁰ White, Ellen G.; *Child Guidance*, p. 519.

⁴¹ Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁴² Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 357.

Chapter 10

Twenty-four Elders Sing a New Song

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;”

Verse 9 – “And they sung a new song.”

This phraseology is not new to the Bible. It was an Old Testament way of expressing delight over a new spiritual experience, a new relational friendship with God or a victory.

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And He hath put a *new song* in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.” Psalm 40:2-3 (emphasis added).

“O sing unto the Lord a *new song*: sing unto the Lord, all the earth, Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; shew forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the people, His wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: He is to be feared above all gods.” Psalm 96:1-4 (emphasis added).

“Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a *new song*, and His praise in the congregation of saints.” Psalm 149:1 (emphasis added).

“Sing unto the Lord a *new song*, and His praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof” Isaiah 42:10 (emphasis added).

This recalls the “new song” that the 144,000 will sing “before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders” (Revelation 14:3) who appear to be listening instead of taking part. John then goes on to say regarding that select group “no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were *also* redeemed from the earth.”⁴³

Here in Revelation 5:9 the 24 elders sing a first song in a series of three remarkable praises *to the worthy Lamb*. This presents a fascinating paradox. Those songs are of joy and deep gratefulness – but these redeemed leaders are concomitantly receiving the “prayers of the saints” in the “odour” of the incense (vs 8) – which is a solemn matter.

This raises a stunning issue. The elders are singing a song which has never been sung before. The Lamb has come to prepare the world for its eternal destiny! The fellow saints, the 24 elders, able to enter into the passion of those still struggling on this earth, are bowing with awe and grateful reverence and relief – “The Lamb can now finish the conflict!” “The final events can now come!”

This imagery is clearly an end-time motif. We are now seeing the end of the *time of the end* ready to start. The final fulfillment of the new covenant issues is about to begin.

“The Lamb is worthy to open the book for three reasons: he was slain (a historical fact), he purchased people for God (the interpretation of that fact), and he made them to be a kingdom and priests (the result of the fact). That the same ascription of worth is directed both to the One upon the throne (4:11) and to the Lamb (5:9) indicates the exalted Christology of the Apocalypse.”⁴⁴

This Christocentric message is further matures as we review the “new song” concept. “The ‘new song’ (*oden kainen*) sung by this heavenly chorus was originally a song of praise inspired by gratitude for new mercies. A song thus named is mentioned six times in the Psalms (Pss. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1), but in the ‘new song’ of Isa 42:10, the words have fuller content, corresponding to the deeper sense of ‘new things’ in Isa 42:9. That deeper sense is that however

⁴³ Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁴⁴ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 135.

great the glories of things in the past, those will be dim in comparison to the splendor of things to come. The new song of v 9 belongs to this new cycle (Charles). This is a song composed especially for a great occasion, one celebrating the redemption of the saints (Swete). Earlier songs in Revelation 4 have celebrated God as the creator (Ladd). Now the divine cause has entered a new stage, calling for a new celebration (cf. Rev 14:3) (Beckwith). *Kainen* ('new') in the Apocalypse signals something regarding the quality of a thing, not [directly] new in reference to time (Charles). The temporal connotation would have been conveyed by *veos* (*neos*, 'new'). This is the description of a song that is new in nature, different from the usual, impressive, better than the old, and superior in value."⁴⁵

The setting means that a new era has come and something new *is* about to occur. The Lamb is depicted with power. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is in evidence (seven eyes). Something dramatic is about to unfold. "The new (i.e., eschatological) *song* sung by the heavenly chorus interprets the full significance of the Lamb's action in taking God's scroll. In this sense, the song responds to the angel's earlier question, 'Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?' (5:2): The slain and risen Lamb is *worthy to take the scroll and open its seals*; he is the Messiah who is able to inaugurate *the new age of God's triumph over the Evil One*."⁴⁶

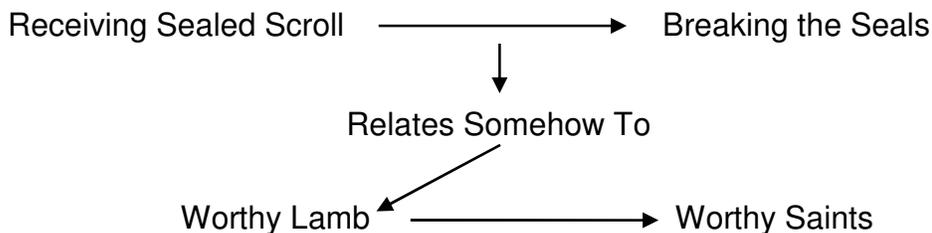
When is the triumph over evil? At His second coming. He is then crowned as a King. This bleeding Lamb is about to *inaugurate events* which will marshal forces that forever neutralize satanic activity and ushers in the eschatological age.

Verse 9 – “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”

A trilogy is introduced as to the reason He is worthy:

He was slain	He suffered
He redeemed us	A penalty or fee was paid
He made us kings and priests	He is providing rewards

Central to this worthiness is who is rewarded. There is an association between:



A release from the bondage of sin can be anticipated with the breaking of the Seals and preparation to examine its contents.

"The question is whether the broader context of Revelation limits this redemption to that from sin alone or expands the redemption to include also the eschatological aspects detailed later in the book. The latter appears to be the case. This is a redemption from *all* hostile power (Charles). The songs of redemption in 14:2-3 and 15:2-4 pertain to redemption from the forces of the beast

⁴⁵ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 399

⁴⁶ Wall, Robert W.; *New International Biblical Commentary* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, 1991), p. 103 (emphasis added).

(Swete). Furthermore, the immediate context speaks of an *emancipation* that results in the creation of a new people of God to rule (cf. 5:10) (Beasley-Murray).⁴⁷

“This deliverance [finally] comes when their persecutors ... are judged, after the seven seals of the scroll are broken. Making the redeemed **kings and priests** (v 10), or, as some manuscripts have it, ‘a kingdom of priests,’ implies that the original kingdom of priests, Israel (Ex 19:5-6), has been done away with and replaced by the Church (cf. Heb 7:12; 8:13).”⁴⁸

“The final deliverance that begins with the taking of the scroll is not just the deliverance of the redeemed – it is the final deliverance of all the created universe from the infection of sin. By revealing the contents of the scroll, Jesus declares the final judgment – a judgment of salvation for the redeemed; a judgment of final condemnation for the lost; and a judgment of the final eradication of sin from the universe. Is it predestinational to say that the book was written before time on earth began? No. It merely illustrates the foreknowledge of God. God’s Spirit pleads with all men to come to repentance. But God has always known which people will respond to His pleadings and which will not. And yet He pleads with all men equally, ‘not wishing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance.’ – 1 Peter 3:9. Part of the evidence of this fact is that He has not disclosed the contents of the scroll to the heavenly angels. The angels do not know who will accept salvation and who will not, and so they work with equal fervor for the salvation of all. The taking of the scroll sets in motion the events that lead to the final judgment. God will not pass judgment on men without adequate warning or without giving every opportunity for repentance. God will not pronounce the final judgment and call the history of this world to a close without warning. He will also not proclaim the final judgment on sin, sinners, and the devil until the full nature of sin has been completely exposed beyond any shadow of a doubt. The calamities described by the breaking of the Seals reflect the process by which God accomplishes these two purposes. The Seals, particularly the first five, serve as a warning and a call to repentance. They also serve to harden the hearts of the wicked and to reveal the extent to which people will fall when they have rejected the Savior and given their lives over to sin. As the Lamb breaks the seventh Seal, there will remain no doubt in all the heavenly realms as to the nature of sin and Satan’s rebellion.”⁴⁹

“The death of Jesus broke the stranglehold of the ‘powers and authorities’ over the creation and produced a great victory of liberation for mankind (Col 2:15). It is this victory, obtained through suffering and death, that entitles Christ to execute the unfolding of the mystery of God’s consummation of history.”⁵⁰

Beale makes an interesting observation – “That the interpretative hymns in vv 9-14 make no explicit mention of the resurrection is astounding and underscores the ironic nature of Christ’s victorious death.”⁵¹ The reason is that it is 2000 years later. It is eschatological praise.

His lamb-like *presence* is clearly a metaphor speaking of His resurrection. There is another profound issue that is present. As noted previously we have an irony of praise from the elders associated with petitions of the persecuted. That hymn transcends the celebration of victory. Note the “bleeding Lamb,” the worthy Lamb (because of His suffering) and the petition from the saints. The imagery is suffering! The Lamb is worthy to address the suffering saints because He suffered. What is His answer? Preparation for retributive judgments – the Seals begin the overt warning process that the end is near. For the saved – the final atonement and eradication of sin.

Verse 9 – “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;”

“This is not a redemption of *all* peoples without exception but all without distinction (people *from* all races), as 14:3-4, 6 makes clear. The general consensus is that this phrase is to be traced back

⁴⁷ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 340

⁴⁸ Gregg, *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁴⁹ Canter, *Op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

⁵⁰ Gaebelein, *Op. cit.*, p. 469.

⁵¹ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 359.

to the almost identical expression repeated in Daniel. There the working refers generally to the inhabitants of the world.

“It is probably more than coincidence that the same Dan 7:9ff. framework also has the threefold phrase ... (‘peoples’), ... (‘tribes’), and ... (‘tongues,’ Dan 7:14b). This may have sparked the association with the formula coined by the author of the Apocalypse. John repeats the Danielic formula in varying combinations elsewhere and usually in relation to other allusions to Daniel (cf. Rev 7:9; 10:11; 11:19; 13:7; 17:15; cf. also 14:6 with 14:14). There are minor changes in the subsequent repetition of the formula, which may have significance.”⁵²

This redemptive scope stresses “... the universal nature of the church and for this purpose piles up phrases for their rhetorical impact. In contrast with the exclusivism of Judaism that prided itself on having been chosen out from among the nations, the church was genuinely ecumenical, recognizing no national, political, cultural, or racial boundaries.”⁵³

Paul, himself a Jew, explicitly rejected this exclusive Jewish mentality. “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God” (I Corinthians 10:32). God’s church had a universal appeal. This was not new to God, but had been forgotten by Israel.

“For I know their works and their thoughts; it shall come, that I will gather *all* nations and tongues, and they shall come, and see My glory.” Isaiah 66:18.

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

Verse 10 – “And hast made us [them – literal] unto our God kings [a kingdom] and priests:”

This redemptive goal was symbolically set in motion in the temporal theocracy given to the Israelites. The setting has changed, but the leadership roles for God’s chosen has remained unaltered.

“And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” Exodus 19:6.

“But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.” Isaiah 61:6.

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 1:6.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” Revelation 20:6.

The way has been opened, through Christ, to approach God and become a royal associate on His throne.

The 24 elders become a metaphor for the promised kingly and priestly roles of the redeemed. John witnesses redemptive reality through them. Because the ancient promise is fulfilled in them, it becomes another justification for the Lamb’s worthiness and their praise. Of stupendous interest is the intercessory role they play for their fellow believers not yet part of that heavenly realm. They, as leaders around the eternal throne, not only bring honor to Jesus but also intercede for the persecuted saints.

“Though believers are currently viewed as a royal priesthood (1 Pet 2:5, 9; cf, Ex 19:6), this is only preliminary to the fullness of the way they will function alongside Christ in the millennial kingdom.”⁵⁴

There is dialogue relative to the meaning of the word “us” in this text. “Us” is a translation error in the KJV. It actually is a third person message. There is linguistic conflict as to whether this refers

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 359-360. (Danielic references include 3:4, 7, 29; 5:19; and 6:25).

⁵³ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁵⁴ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p.342.

to the reality of a king and priest motif for all of God's people or the 24 elders. There appears to be no solution to this debate. Since no other "priests" are apparent to justify His worthiness than the 24 elders, the logical implication would suggest that this first phrase refers to them metaphorically because the kingdom of God has not yet been set up. Yet, they symbolize the vast group who will be around the throne with them.

Verse 10 – "and we shall reign on the earth."

"The elders and [possibly] the living beings say in this song that the Lamb has purchased men from all the tribes of the earth with His blood and that He *has made them to be* a kingdom and priests to our God, and they *will reign* upon the earth. The salvation of the redeemed was guaranteed at Calvary. However, the promise will not be realized until after the second Coming. The kingdom is guaranteed, but Jesus has not yet taken His authority and begun to reign (see the seventh Trumpet). Now look at part of the book of Daniel.

"I kept looking, and that horn was waging war with the saints and overpowering them *until* the Ancient of Days came, and *judgment was passed in favor of the saints of the Highest One and the time arrived when the saints took possession of the kingdom.*' Daniel 7:21-22 (NAS).

"But the court will sit {for judgment}, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. 'Then the sovereignty, the dominion, and the greatness of {all} the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One: His kingdom {will be} an ever lasting kingdom and all the dominions will serve and obey Him.' Daniel 7:26-27 (NAS).

"The kingdom is not established until final judgment is proclaimed, Christ takes His authority and begins to reign, and the saints take possession of the kingdom. Satan and the little horn power, a.k.a. the beast, will dominate and persecute God's people until the Second Coming. The dominion of the little horn has not yet been taken away."⁵⁵

The priestly role is apparent in this visionary scene. The kingly role for them as well as all the redeemed await the destruction of the satanic dominion as the result of the imminent judgment.

"The promise is that the church is to share in the eschatological reign of Christ and all that it will involve (2:26-27; 20:4; 22:5)."⁵⁶

"The fact that believers will serve as reigning powers means that they will be the equivalent of kings (Charles; Beckwith). Spelled out more particularly in 20:4 regarding the millennial kingdom and in 22:5 regarding the eternal state, they will join with Christ in His continual reign following His second advent to the earth. This all stems from the epoch-determining redemptive work of the Lamb."⁵⁷

An apocalyptic motif occurs in Romans 5:17 when Paul says: "How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." This kingdom comes symbolically to us today through His grace: "Behold the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

This "new" song will be blended by two sets of other "beings" before the Seals are opened.

⁵⁵ Canter, *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

⁵⁶ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 137

⁵⁷ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, 342.

Chapter 11

The Heavenly Angels Anticipate Christ's Kingdom

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;”

Verse 11 – “And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders:”

There is progression and acceleration through Revelation in chapters 4 and 5, covering the last part of the Christian dispensation (see table next page).

Looking now at verse 11, “Adding their number to the heavenly chorus, the angelic choir joins in a hymn of praise for the worthy Lamb.”⁵⁸

“Is this song sung at the same time that the first song is sung? Does this take place at the same time that the Lamb takes the scroll? Probably not. Once again, remember that we have to look at the context of the texts to determine the chronology. John acknowledges a sudden change in the scene [when he says “and I beheld”]. All of a sudden, the normal throne room entourage is not alone. Now there are myriads and myriads of angels surrounding the throne. They obviously were not there before. It is safe to say that with a sight in the vision, John is also seeing a different point in time.”⁵⁹

Because John now states “Then I saw” or “And I beheld” it is apparent that the vast throng of angels was not part of his visionary scene until now.

“In response to the testimony of the 4 beasts and the 24 elders, the hosts of heaven join in acclaiming the worthiness of the Lamb. Thus God is vindicated before the angels, who, since the first accusations of Satan in heaven, have to fully understand His action in banishing Satan and saving men.”⁶⁰

The progressive scenes reveal successive steps in an ever elevating Christocentric role. Jesus is being affirmed in a new role by an ever widening circle of created beings. He in turn, as we progress through the book of Revelation, will vindicate, through His redeemed witnesses, God's character. Here the angels are now prepared to fully accept the remarkable blend of final justice and mercy. Now we will see confirmation of that in the next verse in song.

⁵⁸ Wall, *Op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁵⁹ Canter, *Op. cit.*, vss. 10-11, p. 32.

⁶⁰ *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7 p. 773.

	SETTING – ACTION	PRAISE
1. 4:1-4	God's Throne – His Persona – Lamps of Fire Voice of Jesus (heavenly tour guide) 24 elders 4 living creatures	The visionary Being
2. 4:8	4 living creatures Sing adoration song to God	4 creatures to God
3. 4:9-11	God's Throne 24 elders worship – <i>Him that Liveth forever and ever</i> Sing – <i>worthy</i> to receive glory, honor, power	24 elders to God
4. 5:1 (I saw)	God's Throne – His Right Hand – Scroll – Strong "angel" – proclamation	
5. 5:6 (I beheld)	God's Throne – Midst of Throne Lamb – lamps of fire gone Seven horns – sevens eyes – bleeding	
6. 5:7-10 (I beheld)	Lamb – took scroll 24 elders – redeemed Worship lamb – new song Sing – <i>worthy</i> to take book	24 elders to Lamb
7. 5:11-12 (I beheld)	God's Throne – voice of many angels Sing – <i>worthy</i> to receive glory, honor, power	24 elders, 4 creatures, angelic host to Lamb
8. 5:13-14	[to Lamb] – worship every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth	All creatures in universe

What is happening through this progressive revelation? More and more of the heavenly beings are understanding and acknowledging His worthiness to execute the opening of the Seals and finally the scroll. The last group to acknowledge His worthiness will be the lost, after the millennium. Then the books will be opened once again – books of remembrance and names. Why could this not be right after His ascension?

"Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God. 'And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.' Rev. 12:10.

"Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the un-fallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings. Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's

brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken.

“Yet Satan was not then destroyed. *The angels did not even then understand all that was involved in the great controversy.* The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan’s existence must be continued. Man as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of light and the prince of darkness. He must choose whom he will serve.”⁶¹

“By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them.

“*At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this.* Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God’s goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe.

“But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God’s love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law.”⁶²

At the very end – post-millennium:

“In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and heaven the final coronation of the Son of God takes place. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against His government, and executes justice upon those who have transgressed His law and oppressed His people....

“It is now evident to all that the wages of sin is not noble independence and eternal life, but slavery, ruin, and death. The wicked see what they have forfeited by their life of rebellion.... All see that their exclusion from heaven is just....

“As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God.... They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city, all with one voice exclaim, ‘Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints;’ and falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life.

“Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven ... *And now Satan bows down, and confesses the justice of his sentence.*”⁶³

When do the *angels* recognize the worthiness of the Lamb?

We’ll look at that further in the next verse.

“In the Introductory Sanctuary Scene, we see a progression of three songs. These songs do not occur at the same time chronologically. Remember that the events portrayed by Introductory Sanctuary Scenes do not necessarily chronologically precede the events of the associated series. Rather they provide a background for the entire sequence of events. We must analyze the content of the scenes and the events to determine where they lie in relation to each other.”⁶⁴

⁶¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p, 761, 764 (emphasis added).

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 764 (emphasis added).

⁶³ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 666-670 (emphasis added).

⁶⁴ Canter, *Op. cit.*, vs. 10, p. 31.

Verse 11 – “and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;”

“Now John sees a new feature in the vision: ‘thousand upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand’ angels surrounding the throne. The vision is similar to Daniel’s vision of the countless multitude before the Ancient of Days (Dan 7:10).”⁶⁵

“The adoration of the Lamb moves out in ever widening circles. Now it is the innumerable host of angels who lift their voices in a great doxology of praise. Their number (‘thousands upon thousand, and then thousand times ten thousand’) is not to be taken arithmetically but as an apocalyptic symbol for a countless multitude. Angels were held to be so numerous as to be beyond human calculation.”⁶⁶

“We are informed in Scripture as to the number, and the power and glory, of the heavenly beings, of their connection with the government of God, and also of their relation to the work of redemption. ‘The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all.’ And, says the prophet, ‘I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne.’ In the presence chamber of the King of kings they wait – ‘angels, that excel in strength,’ ‘ministers of His, that do His pleasure,’ ‘hearkening unto the voice of His word.’ Psalm 103:19-21; Revelation 5:11. Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, were the heavenly messengers beheld by the prophet Daniel. The apostle Paul declared them ‘an innumerable company.’ Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22. As God’s messengers they go forth, like ‘the appearance of a flash of lightning,’ (Ezekiel 1:14), so dazzling their glory, and so swift their flight.”⁶⁷

We can assume that, now, John sees the whole heavenly host.

Daniel’s view of the heavenly host around the Ancient of Days is in a setting of judgment begun. It is in affirming who the saints will be. When He comes, that group will have *been made up*.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ... *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints” (Colossians 1:12, 26).

The angels now anticipate the Lamb’s final inauguration. The wicked judgment issue must be settled in their minds.

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.”

Verse 12 – “Saying with a loud voice”

The Greek word for “loud” is *megistanes* and is interpreted frequently as “loud” in the New Testament. But this can intimate also grandeur and honor. Thus the imagery is one not of simple loudness but of singing aloud with awe, reverence and beauty to bring honor to the Lamb.

Verse 12 – “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.”

The septiary of qualities that justifies His worthiness has changed. The 24 elders sang of His qualities based on redemption from His death. The angels have not experienced the redemptive issue to praise the Lamb. They ascribe kingly qualities. They now have fully seen the beauty of the plan to deal with the sin controversy and ruling honor is given.

⁶⁵ Gaebelien, *Op. cit.*, pp. 469-470.

⁶⁶ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁶⁷ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 511-512.

Power
Riches
Wisdom
Strength
Honor
Glory
Blessing

This is the adoration song of the angels who have been with Him, perhaps for untold millennia. It is *their* reason He can proceed to finalize the kingdom. The living creatures relate to God as the Creator. The 24 elders relate to Jesus because of His redemptive work; the angels affirming His anticipated kingdom.

“The repetition of *kai* (‘and’) between each member of the series gives a kind of solemn dignity to each word even though the group is viewed as a single complex expression. It requires each of the seven features of the Lamb’s worthiness to be reflected upon separately (Bullinger).”⁶⁸

“D. H. Milling, who has conducted one of the most thorough studies of the origin of doxological language in the NT, includes that 1 Chron 29:11-12 stands behind the combination of ... (‘power’), ... (‘wealth’), ... (‘might’) and ... (‘glory’) and that use of ... (‘wisdom’) is drawn from Dan 2:20 (in Dan 2:23 [Theod.] ‘wisdom’ is coupled with ‘power’). This use of ‘wisdom’ would especially be evident, since apocalyptic use of ‘wisdom’ is unique to Daniel 2 in the OT, and in both Daniel 2 and Rev 5:12 ‘wisdom’ has an eschatological association with the divine kingdom. In the light of this it is probably not accidental that ... (‘might’), ... (‘glory’), and ... (‘honor’) are found together in Dan 2:37 (LXX) and 4:30 (LXX; cf 4:31 LXX), a combination occurring only twice elsewhere in the LXX. Some link with Daniel can be maintained, probably indirectly through a liturgical tradition associated with Daniel or as a result of the writer’s long acquaintance with Danielic language, which had become part of his stock vocabulary for the theology of sovereignty. This influence is to be seen as combined with that of 1 Chronicles.

“The combination of the above terms for ‘might,’ ‘honor,’ and ‘glory’ is also found in Job 37:22-23 and 40:10 (although ... [‘power’] occurs for ... [‘might’]). Varying combinations of two of the three words occur often elsewhere in the LXX and extrabiblical literature). But in Daniel and Revelation the words occur in the same order and refer to the universal kingship given by God to another.”⁶⁹

It is intriguing that E. G. White identified also that song as one the redeemed will sing at the final coronation of Jesus and on the new earth.

“Before the universe has been clearly presented the great sacrifice made by the Father and the Son in man’s behalf. The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him – that He might bring many sons unto glory – that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory. He looks upon the redeemed, renewed in His own image, every heart bearing the perfect impress of the divine, every face reflecting the likeness of their King. He beholds in them the result of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied. Then, in a voice that reaches the assembled multitudes of the righteous and the wicked, He declares: ‘Behold the purchase of My blood! For these I suffered, for these I died, that they might dwell in My presence throughout eternal ages.’ And the song of praise ascends from the white-robed ones about the throne: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.’ Revelation 5:12.”⁷⁰

“Never can the cost of our redemption be realized until the redeemed shall stand with the Redeemer before the throne of God. Then as the glories of the eternal home burst upon our enrapt-

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 405.

⁶⁹ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 364-365.

⁷⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, p. 671.

tered senses we shall remember that Jesus left all this for us, that He not only became an exile from the heavenly courts, but for us took the risk of failure and eternal loss. Then we shall cast our crowns at His feet, and raise the song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' Rev. 5:12."⁷¹

When the angels come on the scene, Jesus has already taken the scroll (verse 5). No Seals have been broken, and the book has not been opened. In anticipation of those events the angels as a whole body declare His kingly worthiness. This is most intriguing. Since the open scroll executes the final outcome of the conflict of the ages, the perspectives are unique:

24 Elders (redeemed) – worthy to give reward and to punish
Angels (created beings) – worthy to reign supreme

A harmony of understanding is coming to the beings of God's creation. The stage is being set for the vindication of God's character. When does this occur?

"This even could possibly happen before the close of probation. It is clear that the angels are shown God's final verdict before the Seven Last Plagues are poured out. Notice what the angel says who pours out the third Plague.

"And the third {angel} poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of waters; and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, 'Righteous art Thou, who art and who wast, O Holy One, because Thou didst judge these things; for they poured out the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink. They deserve it.' And I heard the altar saying, 'Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments.'" Rev 16:4-7 (NAS)

"Apparently, God's final verdict had been revealed to the angels at this point. The Seven Last Plagues are punitive judgments from God upon the wicked. Just as the angels helped God in the ministry of reconciliation to the world, they also participate in the punitive judgments of the Seven Last Plagues. It would make sense that God would give the angels an opportunity to confirm His judgments."⁷²

Chapter 12

The Universe Finally Understands Him

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."

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,"

"This scene anticipates the universal acclamation to be offered at the consummation of all things. If it represents universal praise in an absolute sense, then it issues not only from God's willing subjects but also from His opponents, who will be forced into submission (as in Phil 2:10-11; Col 1:20). Rev 5:9-12 and 5:13 are good examples."⁷³

⁷¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 131.

⁷² Canter, *Op. cit.*, p. 33.

⁷³ Beale, *Op. cit.*, p. 365.

We suddenly move from a heavenly scene to a universal response. What period of time could this refer to? First Roloff provides important insights:

“At a second level, the expansion of the worship oversteps the boundaries of heaven in order to be taken up by all of creation. To its three regions of heavens, earth, and the underworld, which are customarily mentioned (v 3; Phil 2:10), a fourth appears here – the sea (cf. Exod 20:4), as the region that in Jewish thought was considered particularly threatening (cf. 13:1; 21:1). The comprehensive character of this concluding worship by all creatures is also expressed in its content. The brief hymn is directed as much to God the Creator as it is to the messianic lamb. It therefore *summarizes* the two scenes of worship in 4:8-11 and 5:8-12.”⁷⁴

“The phrase ‘and every thing in them’ is not only redundant (Bousset [1906] 262), since it does no more than repeat the phrase ‘every created being,’ but it also indicates that all creation singing the praises of God is a metaphor simply because most creatures are not able to sing in human language.... A three-level cosmos with four sectors, essentially what we find here, encapsulates the ancient Israelite view of the universe: (1) heaven, (2) earth and sea, (3) underworld (Stadelmann, *World*, 37-176). This four-sectored cosmos is mentioned in Job 11:8-9 (heaven, Sheol, earth, sea) and also occurs in the Greek fragment of *Jub.* 2:16, ‘And he completed ... everything which is in the heavens and the earth and the seas and the depths ...’ (Denis, *Fragments*, 74).’⁷⁵

Perhaps it is not “redundant” as Aune noted above. The illusion of praise coming even from evil sectors of creation suggests that *everyone* has finally merged into a unison of honor given to God the Father and God the Son.

“In the sea. More accurately, ‘on the sea,’ as Rev 5. Not *ships*, but creatures of the sea which have come up from its depths to the surface.”⁷⁶

These include the wicked raised for the final coronation of Jesus (Revelation 20:12-13 – “And the sea gave up the dead”).

Only one time in future history will all creation – good and evil – respond to the goodness, justice and fairness of the two heavenly beings. It is here depicted that that is at the final judgment scene in Revelation 20:12. “As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” Isaiah 45:23. That occurs at the final coronation of Jesus after the millennium. Paul captured the remarkable setting when this occurs: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” Philippians 2:10-11. This time the acknowledgment is an “eternal” declaration. The end has come, the vindication of God’s divine character has fully occurred.

Verse 13 – “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

As noted above the motif is praise when the wonders of eternity have now come to fruition. It is a declaration of honor to victors. God and the Lamb are eulogized “for ever and ever!”

“We must have a vision of the future and of the blessedness of heaven. Stand on the threshold of eternity, and hear the gracious welcome given to those who in this life have cooperated with Christ, regarding it as a privilege and an honor to suffer for His sake. As they unite with the angels, they cast their crowns at the feet of the Redeemer, exclaiming: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.... Honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.’ Revelation 5:12, 13.

⁷⁴ Roloff, *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

⁷⁵ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 366.

⁷⁶ Vincent, *Op. cit.*, p. 493.

“There the redeemed ones greet those who directed them to the uplifted Saviour. They unite in praising Him who died that human beings might have the life that measures with the life of God. The conflict is over. All tribulation and strife are at an end.”⁷⁷

“The Feast of Tabernacles was not only commemorative but typical. It not only pointed back to the wilderness sojourn, but, as the feast of harvest, it celebrated the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, and pointed forward to the great day of final ingathering, when the Lord of the harvest shall send forth His reapers to gather the tares together in bundles for the fire, and to gather the wheat into His garner. At that time the wicked will all be destroyed. They will become ‘as though they had not been.’ Obadiah 16. And every voice in the whole universe will unite in joyful praise to God. Says the revelator, ‘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 honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.’ Revelation 5:13.”⁷⁸

“The climactic song is brief, but forceful: ... (*to kathemeno epi tou thronou kai to arnio he eulogia kai he time kai he doxa kai to kratos eis tous aionas ton aionon*, ‘To the one sitting upon the throne and to the Lamb [be] the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever’). The conjunction of God and the Lamb as joint-objects of this doxology here and in Rev. 7:10 reflects the mature theological perspective of this book regarding the Person of Christ. The throne of both is one and the same, and worship offered to one is worship offered to the other (Charles).

“Their exaltation is not temporary. It endures infinitely as the concluding *eis tous aionas ton aionon* (‘forever and ever’) emphatically notes (Swete). With complete unanimity, the entire universe joins in the deserved acclamation.”⁷⁹

“In the presence of the assembled inhabitants of earth and Heaven takes place the final coronation of the Son of God. And now, invested with supreme majesty and power, the King of kings pronounces sentence upon the rebels against his government, and executes justice upon those who have transgressed his law and oppressed his people. Says the prophet of God: ‘I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. [Rev. 20:11, 12.]”⁸⁰

“As if entranced, the wicked have looked upon the coronation of the Son of God.... They witness the outburst of wonder, rapture, and adoration from the saved; and as the *wave of melody sweeps over the multitudes without the city*, all with one voice exclaim, ‘Great and marvelous are Thy works, Thou King of saints’ (Revelation 15:3); and, falling prostrate, they worship the Prince of life.... Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture. His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.”⁸¹

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.”

Verse 14 – “And the four beasts said, Amen.”

⁷⁷ White, Ellen G.; *Testimonies to the Church*, vol 8, p. 44.

⁷⁸ White, Ellen G.; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 541.

⁷⁹ Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 349.

⁸⁰ White, Ellen G.; *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 4, p. 480.

⁸¹ White, Ellen G.; *The Great Controversy*, pp. 668-670.

“(kai ta tessara zoa elegon, Amen, ‘and the four living beings kept saying, ‘Amen’’). They pronounced the first doxology of 4:8 and now conclude the final one (Charles). They do not say it just once, but as the verb tense indicates, they keep repeating it over and over.”⁸²

It is far more than the simple conclusion of a doxology. Chapters 4 and 5 present segments of end-time history. These leading living creatures will be the first administrative beings to acknowledge the grand finale of the conflict of the ages. Over and over they say “and be it so.”

“Similar liturgical responses are regularly used by the author to conclude throne scenes (see 4:9-11; 7:11b-12; 11:16-18; 19:4-8). This reads like a dramatization of the conclusion of the hymn in Phil 2:5-11, where in v 10 it is said that ‘at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth’ (cf. the enumeration of these categories of creatures in v 13a).”⁸³

Though many commentaries focus on the liturgy and antiphonal praises with “Amen” being the expectant end to the worship session, the motif as noted above, goes far beyond a simple heavenly celebration. These chapters reveal history in transition. Concluding imagery dealing with sin and final victory is presented. The four beasts, with administrative closure, say, “Amen, amen, amen.”

“It is found some ... [101 times in the New Testament with 52] of them being translated ‘verily,’ and the rest ‘amen.’ All that are found in Revelation are translated ‘amen,’ meaning at the beginning of a discourse, ‘surely, truly, of a truth;’ or at the end of a discourse, ‘so it is, so be it’ or ‘may it be fulfilled.’ With verse 14 being the end of the discourse of chapter 5, and with all the items being fulfilled, ‘so it is’ or ‘so be it’ would be the appropriate thought. So, having said ‘Amen,’ meaning ‘so it is’ or ‘so be it,’ these representatives of the celestial (and possibly the earthly) hosts acknowledge enthusiastically the Lamb’s role in vindicating the character of God when all questions about Him will so be laid to rest as the ‘book’ is opened to their examination. To them, although much is yet to be revealed, this is reality in the ‘proleptic’ sense.”⁸⁴

Verse 14 – “And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.”

As was presented in 4:9-10, when the four living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to God the 24 elders fall down and worship Him who sat on the throne. The focus has just been on honor and praise to the Lamb. It is suggested that a similar sequence is now occurring with Jesus – first the beast, then the 24 elders.

A fascinating exegetic parallel with Daniel 7 is once again seen:

	<u>Daniel 7</u>	<u>Revelation 5</u>
Allusion to Messiah	Son of Man (v 13)	Lamb of God (v 6)
Came to God	Came to Ancient of Days (v 13)	Came, takes book (v 7)
Kingdom given	To all people, nations and languages (v 14)	To redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation (v 9)
Reign of saints	Saints possessed kingdom (vv 18, 22, 27)	Made us kings and priests (v 10)
Reign of God	Everlasting kingdom (v 27)	For ever and ever (v 13)

⁸² Thomas, *Op. cit.*, p. 409.

⁸³ Aune, *Op. cit.*, p. 367.

⁸⁴ Wood, *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

Evidence mounts that the Danielic tie covers the investigation judgment all the way to the establishment of the everlasting kingdom. The Johnian vision does the same, covering differing and more detailed issues, especially of the terminal phases along with the executive judgment.

“Chapter 5 has revealed a central truth that governs the entire book of Revelation. By his sacrificial death the Lamb has taken control of the course of history and guaranteed its future. He alone was worthy to break the Seals and open the scroll of destiny.

“This vision of the grandeur of the triumphant Lamb prepares John to share with his readers the more solemn aspects of the judgments that lie in the future. A vivid portrayal of the One who has won the crucial battle against sin supplies the confidence that in the troubled times to come there remains a hope that is steadfast and sure.”⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Mounce, *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

THE MYSTERIOUS “EIGHTH”

REVELATION 17:11

“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”

The KJV, along with many other translations, provide for many subjective viewpoints. Many conclusions are even drawn based on the beast’s existence. If the beast “is not” – then the heads don’t exist. But in verse 10 it said that one head “is.” Thus, the beast must exist. In addition, the prophetic interlude distinctly said that the woman was on the beast. Contextually, both are present and that must be our exegetic foundation.

The CLV (*Concordant Literal Version*) States: “*And the wild beast which was and not is also it eighth is and out of the seven is and into destruction is going away.*”

There are no comas or punctuation. How one might place those would impact its meaning and our interpretation of the “eighth.” To help discover the proper emphasis, we must go back and review collectively the progression of the “beast” messages, to ties elsewhere. This will help unfold the meaning of this verse and what is to come.

The first reference in this chapter to the beast is: “*So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*” Revelation 17:3.

The beast is introduced by the vial angel as *therion* or “vicious beast.” This has been depicted many times in previous apocalyptic messages. It was last seen in company with the dragon and false prophet in 16:13. There, each “creature” had a frog-like “spirit” coming out of its mouth. There it was *distinct* from the dragon and false prophet. It also has a seat or government and a kingdom (16:10). That kingdom was full of *darkness*, reflecting its lack of truth. It represents error and and apostasy. Later, the name “blasphemy” will be associated with *therion*.

This beast has a distinguishing “mark” that is to be placed on mankind. That mark, if they “worship its image,” will actually result in the first vial angel pouring out its plagues of sores on them (16:2). The saints have to “fight” or “resist” in some dramatic way against getting this mark – and here the text expands – the resistance was against the beast itself, its image, its number or name (15:2). Daniel alluded to a “beast” being a king or kingdom (Daniel 7:17). All of these “allusions” are **when** the beast kingdom is spiritually harming mankind.

By the Greek word *therion*, we can associate immediately with a kingdom that is anti-God. Indeed, the next phrase of 17:3 states that it is “full of names of blasphemy.” This beast is making claims or assuming authority that only belong to Christ or the Father. Its end is specifically stated to be the lake of fire (19:20).

The vial angel notes the scarlet (*kokkinon*) color of this beast. [Observation: This is different than the fiery red (*pyrros*) of the dragon (12:3)]. Scarlet is the color of luxurious textile materials (18:12, 16; cf. Numbers 4:8, II Samuel 1:24, Jeremiah 4:30). It was the color of the royal-like robe put on Jesus before the crucifixion (Matthew 27:28-29). So the beast is representing a royal power of utmost splendor. BUT – since that red body is covered with blasphemous names, it **also** represents sin (Isaiah 1:18).

Finally, the place the *therion* resides is in the *eremon* or wilderness. In the Old Testament, Babylon is called *eremon* (Isaiah 14:23). This plays on the symbol of emptiness and desolation. Tied to the darkness, it represents total barrenness from truth because of apostasy.

The apostate church–woman sits on the beast. “Sitting” (*kathemenen*) suggests ruling, managing or guiding the beast kingdom. She is in charge – yet, it states in verse 7, “the beast that carrieth (*bastazontos*)” her. The woman would not have power without that beast. The Roman Catholic Church would have no ambassador representation at the U.N. or share in world political dialogue without the Vatican State. The representation is explicit and the application singular.

Another important key to understanding the “eighth” is found in this verse:

“The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.” Revelation 17:8.

This threefold formula mocks Christ’s life, death and resurrection (Revelation 1:18a, 2:8). But – this beast **goes** into perdition, noted later in 19:20. Christ will **come** on a white horse as “King of kings, Lord of lords” (19:16). This will fulfill the promise, “I am coming” (3:11; 16:15; 22:7, 12, 20). Paul explicitly shows this divine rulership and judgeship: “then that wicked shall be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming” (II Thessalonians 2:8). This ties to that king coming “in righteousness he doeth judge and make war” (Revelation 19:11) whose “eyes were as a flame of fire” (19:12) and “out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword.”

Paul then refines who this “wicked” is: “Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan” “with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness (II Thessalonians 2:9, 10; cf. Daniel 11:36, 12:10).

This beast arises from the *abyss* or *bottomless pit*, which **explicitly** parallels the description of 11:7. This beast, then, will be the one that makes war against the two witnesses during the 1260 days of prophesying. It will be a time of persecution (11:3). The “shall ascend” is during the final three and a half years of earth’s history. This timing tie is vital to see.

It is important to know that Satan had the key to that bottomless pit (9:1). This beast was one of his minions, which he will let out. The beast’s followers, in turn, are not written in the book of life. Thus, they will also go into perdition (17:8).

The beast has seven heads which ties it to the seven hills of Rome – a *commentary clue* as to where this beast power/kingdom is located – and from where the woman is supported or “carried” (17:9). The heads are numbered; thus, sequenced. The imagery suggests that the importance of the “woman and the beast” comes when the sixth head exists – now we know – pope – “is” in power. As noted previously, that has to be the late Pope John Paul II. It was during his “reign” that the ecclesiastical power rode to new heights by the powerful work of the Vatican bringing down the eastern communist bloc. Note that there are **only seven** “kings” declared in 17:10 – not eight related to the **head[s]**.

Following the seventh **or** concurrent with the short leadership “space” (17:10) of Pope Benedict XVI, comes verse 11: *“And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.”*

Once again, the beast is described from the formula of verse 8.

Was	is not	shall ascend (8a) (future power setting)
Was	is not	yet is (8b) (exists but power contained)
Was	is not	even he is the eighth (17:11) [the last beast head is implied]

Eight represents renewal, beginning again or fresh start. Christ arose on the eighth day of the Passion Week. It was seen as a rebirth or a new beginning. Intriguingly, the Revelation 13:18 beast name was tied to man's number – 666. It neither represented “seven” nor achieved an “eighth.” This “eighth” is **not one of** the seven (NASB, NEB) kings. They are sequenced, however. Since the “eighth” also goes to perdition – it/he concludes history.

The papacy “was” in ~610–1870 A.D.; in 1798 the ecclesiastical power was weakened; by 1870 its secular power was lost (the papal states were confiscated). Then, distinctly in 1870 it was, “is not.” The church/state wasn't reestablished until 1929 with the Lateran Treaty. Revelation 13 and its wounded head “history” (13:3, 12, 14) would parallel this historical “is not” era. But 1929 on suggests the “yet is” period of time. There is an eighth head implied, but Biblically, we are encouraged not to think of it as a king but a unique power.

It is sequenced with the seven and is like them in two ways: (1) It goes to perdition and (2) it is the eighth head of this blasphemous, sinful kingdom. The transliteration suggests that the eighth **is** also the beast. The literal Greek translation doesn't assume that. The “head” formula actually makes sure our *orientation* of the eighth power is *over* this beast. But there arises another suggestion: In verse 8, though it was “not,” it ended by saying “yet is.” This means that it “was” but was functioning as if it still “is not.” Now the implication is that the “eighth” is not only over the beast but is giving it special power or function. Since the number “eight” sets the stage for some satanic “rebirth” (over a blasphemous beast) – it portrays a finale of a horrible rise of apostasy and seditious secular power. The iniquitous setting would suggest Paul's stunning comment, “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:14) is now being fulfilled.

There is no power or being that could enter the final fray in the end-time conflict with a better qualification and bent than Satan. He is clearly devilishly anxious because his last period of opportunity has come (Revelation 12:12). This is in the setting when he wars against the saints in the “wilderness” of earth during a 1260-day period. It is also the introductory verse to chapter 13, where he is a deceiver under the guise of “light” – but is the “prince of darkness” (Luke 22:53, Ephesians 6:12). Contextually, the “eighth” is a new type of power that leads in earth's final deception, likely with the harlot woman still present. Revelation 13 follows this chapter's beast theme. **Then** the dragon gives the antichrist kingdom its power and the full imagery is an outworking of that secular kingdom over the whole world. The “eighth” is Satan – coming as an angel of light and permitting the beast to come out of the abyss to do all it can to hurt the “two witnesses,” God's people, who are finishing the work.

Since Revelation 13:4 states that the dragon/Satan (Revelation 12:9) gives power to the beast in this final apostasy against God, it would suggest that Satan comes when the seventh is still part of the beast – but now acting under Satan's power and control. An allusion to this comes in this thought:

“In the last days Satan will appear as an angel of light, with great power and heavenly glory, and claim to be the Lord of the whole earth. He will declare that the Sabbath has been changed from the seventh to the first day of the week; and as lord of the first day of

the week he will present this spurious sabbath as a test of loyalty to him. Then will take place the *final fulfillment* of the Revelator's prophecy. [Rev. 13:4-18, quoted.]

“In connection with this scripture, the entire fourteenth chapter of Revelation should be studied much by God's people. Verses nine to eleven bring to view the special message of warning against worshiping the beast and his image, and receiving his mark in the forehead or in the hand. This warning is to be given to the world by those who are mentioned in the twelfth verse as keeping ‘the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.’” – *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 19, p. 282 (emphasis added)..

“Satan came as an angel of light in the wilderness of temptation to deceive Christ; and he does not come to man in a hideous form, as he is sometimes represented, but as an angel of light. He will come personating Jesus Christ, working mighty miracles; and men will fall down and worship him as Jesus Christ. We shall be commanded to worship this being, whom the world will glorify as Christ. What shall we do?—Tell them that Christ has warned us against just such a foe, who is man's worst enemy, yet who claims to be God; and that when Christ shall make His appearance, it will be with power and great glory, accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand angels and thousands of thousands; and that when He shall come, we shall know His voice (RH Dec. 18, 1888).” – *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1105.



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