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Revelation 5

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Revelation 5.

Topics.

- A scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.
 - No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was, able to open the scroll.
 - Weep not, the lion of the tribe of Judah, has conquered.
 - Among the elders, John sees a Lamb with seven horns and with seven eyes.
 - The Lamb takes the scroll from the hand of the One seated on the throne.
 - You ransomed a people for God; you are worthy to open the seals.
 - Every creature in heaven, on earth and in the sea, give glory to the Lamb.
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A personal note: though I have always loved reading and studying the Scriptures and have now walked with Christ and in God's grace for around fifty years the following studies should not be taken to be dogmatic, inflexible or the final word on the matter since I am fully aware that my mind is limited by mortality and that greater understanding of God's revelation is continually becoming clearer before our eyes as we move closer to the time of Christ's glorious return in glory.

The previous chapter: began with a voice calling John up to heaven. He saw in vision form One seated on a throne and around the throne twenty-four elders seated on twenty-four thrones and four living creatures. The chapter ended with the heavenly host saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come, worthy is He to receive glory, honour and power.

REVELATION 5:1

A Scroll Written Within and on the Back, Sealed with Seven Seals.

- **Revelation 5:1:** Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll (book in KJV) written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.

The manner of writing in these ancient times was on sheets of parchment, which, when finished, were rolled up in the form of a cylinder. The scroll was often referred to as a volume or a book. How this scroll and these seals were arranged, John does not say, it is possible that it was:

- Seven separate rolls, that were all bound by one main seal.
- A long piece of parchment paper rolled on a round stick, consisting of seven seals containing seven volumes of seven periods of prophecy so that as the first seal was removed the first volume would be opened, but the second seal remained closed until the first volume was unrolled and reached its end and so on to the seventh seal.

Since we are not told how this scroll with seven seals scrolls was arranged all that is necessary to know is, that it was wrapped up in such a manner that John could not open the seven seals or see the visions they concealed all at once. However, what we do now is that:

- It was the will of God that the scroll would be opened for everybody to read and that the contents and future revelations it contained would be made known to all.
- They revealed the perfect whole of God's final plan and purposes that He not only purposed, in His eternal mind and by His eternal foreknowledge and wisdom, but also saw eventuating, because of man's sin (i.e., self-centredness, greed and lust for power and riches).
- They contain the secret purposes of God and reveal the future of human history from heaven's viewpoint predicting that the kingdoms of the world will become the Kingdoms of God.
- The accomplishment of it extends from John's time, through the Roman Empire and through all continuing ages until God Himself descends from heaven on a Great White Throne.
- The opening of each of the seven seals reveals the events by which God brings judgment upon the world and clears the way for the final visible setting up of Christ's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

These seals show that God in His eternal foreknowledge is fully aware of all that is to come upon earth, the world and the church and that all who belong to His Kingdom should rest in this knowledge as there is nothing that takes Him by surprise or that He is not already aware of. All the contents of these seven scrolls are revealed in the following chapters.

NOTE: just as Christ does not really stand in heaven in the shape of a lion or of a lamb with seven horns and seven eyes (Rev. 5:6) and there is no beast in the sea with seven heads, ten crowns and ten horns (Rev. 13:1). Likewise, there is no real scroll of parchment in heaven. However, these figurative symbols do symbolise something of their kind. The scroll signifies God's divine counsels and revelations and things yet to come, the Lamb signifies Christ and the elders signify the faithful

Him who was seated on the throne: (v1) some wonder if it is Christ or God that is the One seated on the throne. The following clearly shows that it is God Almighty, the creator of all things and source of all life who is seated on the throne. In (Rev. 4:4-10) the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures, are pictured saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, meaning, He has forever been, and is and is to come, referring to His descent on a Great White Throne and being All in All on earth. (Rev. 4:11) (1 Cor. 15:28). Later they are seen praising Him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, saying, "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." (Rev. 4:4-10). Then here in this chapter we see that the One on the throne has the scroll in His right hand and the Lamb takes the scroll from His hand which clearly shows that it is God who is the One on the throne and not the Lamb, symbolizing the Lord Jesus Christ, since it is Christ who takes the scroll from the hand of the One on the throne.

The right hand: (v1) is the emblem of God's all-ruling power.

The number seven: abounds in the book of Revelation, seven sealed scrolls, seven trumpets and seven vials, by which the world kingdoms are shaken and overthrown, the beast's kingdom destroyed and the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ ushered in. In the Scriptures, certain numbers have symbolic significance, seven is, considered to be God's number for the following reasons:

- The number seven, for example, is often used to symbolize that which is complete, or perfect, in God's eyes. For instance, God's creative week comprises seven days, or extended time periods, during which God completely accomplishes his creative purpose regarding the earth. (Gen. 1:3) to (Gen. 2:3)

- Scripture states, "The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times." (Psalm 12:6).
- Elisha sent a messenger to the leper Naaman, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean," so he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. (2 Kings 5:10) (2 Kings 5:14).
- Revelation speaks of seven spirits of God (Rev. 3:1) and before His throne seven burning torches of fire, which are the seven spirits of God. (Rev. 4:5) and of a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Revelation 5:6).
- Briefly speaking seven generally symbolises perfection and completeness.

The number four: is the world-wide number (i.e., north, south, east and west) while the number three is, the divine number (i.e., the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) together they total the number seven which expresses perfect completeness.

Written, within and without: (v1) (Greek, within and behind) for the sake of convenience in reading the volume of the scroll as the parchment was unrolled, it was customary to write on one side only, and very uncommon to write on both. There are, various speculations as to what the expression, "written, within and without," may signify, following are the most common ideas it may carry:

- Fullness and completeness, so that nothing more needs to be added to the scroll. (Rev. 22:18).
- The record of the things and events that are to be accomplished are vast (i.e., will not only affect the earth, but also the heavens).
- The certainty of it reaching and affecting all creatures, peoples and things.
- The spiritual work of Christ working within the heart of the faithful and the literal works taking place without upon the earth.
- Some parts are clear while other parts are obscure.
- Two separated divisions (i.e., the faithful within the church and the ungodly without the church).

REVELATION 5:2-4

No one in Heaven or on, or under the Earth, could Open the Scroll.

- **Revelation 5:2-4:** And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll (book in KJV) and break its seals?" ³And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, ⁴and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll (book in KJV) or to look into it.

No one in heaven: (v3) is alluding to the heavenly host and those John saw in his vision, the twenty-four elders, the four living creatures and the angels none could open the scroll, not even John who could clearly see it.

No one on earth: (v3) it mattered not whether they were the most-godly of men or women, kings or princes, the wisest of men or scribes, born of noble blood, sages, diviners, prophets, priests, philosophers, none could open the scroll or look into it.

Under the earth: (v3) this is most likely an allusion to those who practise the art of necromancy. The supposed practice of calling up the dead and communicating with them especially in, order to predict the future and understand mystical and spiritual mysteries. Since we are told that, "no one was, able to look into the scroll," it is possible that no one was able to face the glory radiating from the scroll especially since it is pictured being held in the right hand of the Almighty Holy God, but it is more likely no one could open it, because it contained fearful judgments of God and only Christ was worthy of opening such dreadful and frightening terrors of destruction that would affect the entire globe of the earth.

John weeps loudly: (v4) no doubt John wept, because he had a great heartfelt passion to know what was contained within the scroll as all faithful Christians desire to know all they can about their King and Saviour and of God's plans and purposes and what is to come upon the church and the world. This could be likened to a father holding his child's best story book before their eyes and not opening the pages, naturally the child would be filled with sorrow in the same way that John was. Those who are near to God, greatly desire to know more. This is most likely why John, who was the one who had great love toward God and insight into His Gospel and His grace was filled with deep sorrow when no-one was found worthy to open the seven-sealed scroll. None of us can foresee future events concerning ourselves in this world or what joys or calamities may befall us, but, no Christian need weep today concerning what will come upon the church or the world, as nothing is sealed.

The scrolls are open for all to read, nothing is hidden of God's future, plans and purposes all that is needed to know is available to all who desire to know what will come upon the church and the world in the generations to come and the latter days. We should not weep if we do not perfectly understand every detail of what has been revealed to us by the opening of the scrolls, but, we should all weep if we do not understand the full beauty of the Gospel and the enormous grace of God in Christ, and, also be driven with passion to search out its majestic beauty. Today, the tears of the faithful do not flow from anything that is hidden as Johns did, but from deep inner gratitude and thankfulness as they look upon the bloodstained cross of Calvary and perceived the price their Saviour paid as their sin pegged him there.

We should all have John's passion to seek out all we can know of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, especially now all the seals are opened and everything we need to know of God and to be saved and walk in His will is openly recorded in the book that contains His inspired word. If John greatly wept, because he could not look, into the scroll of God's future revelations, how much more should those who are ignorant of the Gospel of Christ that leads to everlasting salvation shed rivers of tears. Though it is a good and exciting thing to desire to learn and understand the revelations of God, and the promises and prophecies of Scripture, that reveal the final events to believers and to the church. No one needs to weep because they cannot foresee future events concerning themselves in this world, but all should weep who do not know the Gospel that leads to eternal life.

REVELATION 5:5

Weep Not, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, has Conquered.

- **Revelation 5:5:** And one of the elders said to me, "Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered (prevailed in KJV), so that he can open the scroll (book in KJV), and its seven seals."

For information concerning the elders see the title, "Twenty-four elders," following (v7-8) (below).

The Lion of the tribe of Juda: (5) Christ is referred to as a lion for the following reasons:

- When Jacob called his sons together, to tell them what will happen to them in days to come he said of his son Judah, "Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up, he stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?" (Gen. 49:9). So, the lion became the ancient symbol of the tribe of Judah and it was from this tribe Jesus came.
- The standard of Judah in Israel's camp is said by Jewish writers to have been a lion.
- The lion is a symbol of strength, courage, and sovereignty.
- The lion is the king of beasts, the monarch of the forest, and as such became an emblem of kingly authority and power and since Christ is King above all and has power over all principalities and authorities he is likened to the lion.
- The lion is the representative of the royal house of David and Jesus is from the bloodline of David.

The root of David: (5) the following verses show that Jesus sprung up from David as a shoot or sprout springs up from a fallen tree.

- There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse (David's father), and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. (Isaiah 11:1).
- In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious. (Isaiah 11:10).
- Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: for he shall branch out from his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. (Zech. 6:12).
- I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star. (Rev. 22:16)

Jesus is called the Son of David; the branch of David; the root of David; David's Son and David's Lord; the Lamb slain and the Lion of Judah

Has conquered (prevailed in KJV): (5) Christ through struggle, sorrow and extreme pain not only conquered, self (i.e., not my will but yours be done) (Luke 22:42), but also conquered sin, the devil and death and as, a result of his overcoming victory is counted worthy to open the seven seals. The Father gave the worthy Lamb that had been slain the seven-sealed scroll that contained His future judgments, plans and purposes for the church and the world.

REVELATION 5:6

John sees a Lamb with Seven Horns and with Seven Eyes.

- **Revelation 5:6:** And between the throne (in the midst of the throne in KJV) and the four living creatures (the four beast in KJV) and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

For information concerning the elders see the title, "Twenty-four elders," following (v7-8) (below).

The Lamb: in the following verses John, Peter and Phillip liken the Lord Jesus Christ to a Lamb:

- The next day he (John) saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! (John 1:29).
- He (John) looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36).

In these verses, John pictures Jesus as a Lamb, for its whiteness, innocence and, because lambs were sacrificed for sin.

- With the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. (1 Peter 1:19).

Here Peter pictures Jesus as a lamb, that is too young to have done any wrong.

- Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. (Acts 8:32).

Philip pictures Jesus as a Lamb for its obedience to its master, its meekness and patience and as one born for slaughter. Both in the Old and New Testament, Christ is often pictured as a lamb for its innocence purity of nature; its harmlessness and its meek manner throughout the whole of its young life. It is an animal of endearment, which signifies the endearing relationship in which Christ now stands related to us, as the consequence of His life on earth as the sacrificial Lamb and our relationship to him as his dear lambs and him as our precious Lamb and being one with him.

NOTE: it should be mentioned here that we should not presume that Christ appeared in the form of a Lamb in heaven, nor should we think he appeared with seven eyes and four horns or that there are twenty-four literal thrones and a sea of glass there or crowns of gold, these are all merely symbols that signify different things and events to come on earth and the world.

In, the midst of the throne: may mean that Jesus was in the centre of the heavenly host, but it is more likely that it carries the idea that he was an extremely prominent and visible figure standing amongst the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures that he is spoken of as being in the very midst of the group around about the throne. In the previous verse, John was told that a Lion will open the seals and yet he now turns and looks and sees a Lamb. The Lamb is a title often given to the Messiah, for the following two reasons, firstly, because the lamb was an emblem of innocence and secondly, because a lamb was offered in sacrifices as an offering for sin.

- John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

In some way, the Lamb appeared as though it had been slain having marks of some kind that clearly showed that it had been put to death, what these marks were we are not told. It is enough to know that they were wounds that identified the Lamb as the exalted resurrected Lord Jesus Christ the Redeemer who died and ascended in glory to the right-hand side of God in heaven. The focus on the Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, highlights the truth that the influence of Christ's sacrifice will never cease to influence all God's eternal plans and purposes throughout all eternity.

NOTE: we should not try to picture the arrangement of the horns and eyes on the Lamb who is spoken of as having, "seven horns and seven eyes," (v6) nor should we attempt to imagine how it was, since the entire representation is symbolical, and we are only expected to understand the meaning of the symbols without being able to form a picture of the figure as it appeared to John.

Seven horns: the following verses show that horns signify power, authority and dominion (especially of kings), and are used as a weapon to wound and kill by the animal that has them and are therefore used to symbolise kings and armies destroying nations.

- A firstborn bull (the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh) he has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth (Deut. 33:17).

Here horns are a symbol of ruthless armies destroying people and kingdoms.

- Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made for himself horns of iron and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you shall push the Syrians until they are destroyed. (1 Kings 22:11).

Here horns are symbols of power and weapons of war.

- The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, declares the LORD. (Jer. 48:25).

Here the horn is a symbol of a powerful king (now defeated)

- I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns! ¹⁹And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What are these?" And he said to me, "These are the horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." (Zech. 1:18-19).

Here horns are symbols of four powerful kings.

- As for the ten horns, out of this kingdom ten kings shall arise, and another horn shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings. (Dan. 7:24).

Here horns are a symbol of eleven kings with great influence and power.

- The ram that you saw with the two horns, these are the kings of Media and Persia. (Daniel 8:20).

Here the two horns are symbols of two kings with great authority and power.

Summary of horns: horns of a wild ox, signifying the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh are spoken of as goring people to the ends of the earth (Deut. 33:17) and horns of iron signify power and weapons of war subduing and destroying powerful nations; (1 Kings 22:11). The great strength of a nation is symbolized by a horn (Jer. 48:25) and four horns signify four kings scattering Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. (Zech. 1:18-19). Ten horns symbolize ten powerful kings; a single horn symbolizes a king that subdues three kings (Dan. 7:24) and the two horns of a ram symbolize two powerful nations. Clearly horns are a symbol of power and strength so seven horns signify great power and strength and when associated with God symbolize perfect power and strength used to carry out His full and perfect will.

Eyes: (v6) eyes generally symbolise intelligence, knowledge, insight and wisdom (especially divine wisdom). When in the context of God's eyes, they carry the idea that God is able to survey all things and symbolise His perfect knowledge, His perfect foresight of future events, and His omniscience and omnipresence, which is always working everywhere to fulfil and accomplish His plans and purposes.

Seven eyes and God's Spirit: (v6) in the context of this verse John clearly tells us that the seven eyes, are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Outward objects are made visible to us by our eyes, so the eyes when linked to the Spirit symbolise God's all-pervading Spirit that perceives and continually sees and surveys all things. In the following verse, Zechariah talks of seven eyes of the LORD running to and fro throughout the whole earth:

- There are seven eyes of the LORD, which range (run to and fro in KJV), through the whole earth. (Zech. 4:10).

The following verses of Revelation speak of seven spirits of God:

- Between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (Rev. 5:6).

The seven spirits of God embrace the following three things, firstly the word of the LORD and His favour going out to all the earth and affecting the secular and physical world, secondly, the word of the LORD influencing

the spiritual world of the church and thirdly God's judgments going out against the following:

1. Those with a superior, condescending and arrogant attitude.
2. Those who lie and kill the innocent.
3. Those who plan and plot to do evil.
4. Those who go out with the intention to do wrong and a false witness.
5. Those who sow discord and strife amongst God's family (Proverbs 6:16-19).

All, of the above attitudes have the potential power to destroy the eternal spiritual global House that God is building in the Lord Jesus Christ, but God by His Spirit of love and grace is also watching over His Kingdom and will bring it to triumphant victory because it is being built as Zechariah prophesied, "Not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit," (Zech. 4:6). However, "the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth," is not limited to what is stated above, but also embraces all, of the following various diversities by which the Spirit is described in the New Testament:

- The Spirit of wisdom and of illumination in the knowledge of Christ.
- The Spirit of truth and of spiritual life.
- The Spirit of holiness and of liberty.
- The Spirit of self-control.
- The Spirit of a sound mind and of love.
- The Spirit of counsel and of might and power.
- The Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba Father," and the Spirit of grace.
- The Spirit of supplication and the Spirit of life.
- The Spirit of anointing and of the fire of judgment.
- The Spirit of revitalising energy and the Spirit of cleansing and refreshing
- The Spirit that searching the deep things of God and reveals them to us.
- The Spirit of truth that guides in the ways of God and frees from the law, sin and death.
- The Spirit of grace that covers the weakness of human nature with its, many weaknesses, miseries, sins and cravings.

These are all diversities of operation, but all flow from the same Spirit. Which means that for every part of human nature, the mind, heart, emotions intellect and moral being there are gifts which fit every part of our nature. In the same way that water takes on the form of any vessel into which it is poured, likewise, the Spirit of God takes on the form of those it is poured into and what they impose upon it, by their weaknesses, needs and sins. The expression, "sent forth into all the earth," refers to the fact that that Spirit pervades and surveys all things and mysteriously operates everywhere.

- There are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another

gifts of healing by the one Spirit,¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.¹¹ All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:6-11).

The number seven: suggests the idea of perfection and completeness, suggesting the endless, boundless, manifold, diversity of the operations of the life-giving Spirit that flows from Jesus Christ. It is the full number which carries the idea of completeness.

Sent forth into all the earth: carries the idea that the Spirit is sent throughout all the earth with spiritual gifts and judgments, both in relation to the secular world and Christ's church and to God's enemies and the enemies of the church.

The seven eyes of God: express God's Holy Spirit and His omniscience, who though He is in heaven He is at the same time by His Spirit everywhere. His manifold works of grace and the fullness and influences of His Spirit flows out from heaven into the external universe. The expression, "the seven eyes of God," may also include God's angels, who the book of Hebrews tells us are all ministering spirits sent throughout the earth to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14).

REVELATION 5:7-8

The Lamb takes the Scroll from the the One Seated on the Throne.

- **Revelation 5:7-8:** And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures (beasts in KJV) and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls (vials in KJV) full of incense (odours in KJV), which are the prayers of the saints.

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For information concerning, "Jesus taking the scroll," and "Him who is seated on the throne," see the notes following (v1) (above).

In chapter fifteen: one of the four living creatures is pictured giving seven-golden bowls (golden vials in KJV) to the seven angels (Rev. 15:7). These golden bowls were normally used for sweet smelling incense, but are now filled with the wrath of God, that is about to be poured out upon the antichrist kingdoms in answer to the following heartfelt prayer and cry of the faithful, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10). The fact it was one of the four living creatures that gives the seven vials of wrath to the angels (Rev. 15:7) shows that the four living creatures cannot be human ministers of the church on earth (as some suppose). In John's visions of future things to come the four living creatures are seen in heaven from the time John was called up to heaven (Rev. 4:1-11) to the time the Bride appears ready for the Lamb. (Rev. 19:4-7). During all this time the church is still on earth which means that the four living creatures most likely symbolise:

- Four figures that have great authority, outstanding power and influence and stand in the presence of the LORD forever ready to carry out His will, plans and purposes.
- God's mighty power and omnipresence over the entire universe and the earth and His will and judgment being worked out on the nations and all creation.
- Their six wings (Rev. 4:8) most likely symbolise strength of something (natural or spiritual) that carries a thing (good or bad) to its destination.

There is one on the north, east, south and west side of God's throne which signifies that their power, influence and calamities will affect the entire

earth and not just part of it in the latter days. Being awe-inspiring creatures of splendour and wonder in vision form that worship God and the Lord Jesus Christ they inspire and encourage the church by showing that all things are in God's control and no matter what terrors, dread and calamities come upon earth the redeemed will be resurrected to heaven and stand before God's throne and worship the Lamb with the angels surrounding them.

Living creatures or beasts: the King James Bible uses the word "beasts," while many modern Bibles use the word, "living creatures." Since the creatures have characteristics and appearances that beasts cannot have such as being full of eyes in front and behind and having the face of a man (Rev.4:6-8), the better translation is, "a living thing or living creature," especially since they are to be taken as symbols that represent various things and not literal animals. Whatever these four living creatures maybe, it is interesting to notice that these vials/bowls are given by one of the four living creatures that not only had the power to pour out His divine justice upon His enemies, but who also represent creation and that it is through creation that the wrath of God comes upon the anti-Christian beast world. It could be said that God has given to all things an eternally righteous law that is averse to evil, and cannot be broken without consequences, which means that His wrath is the operation of His righteous law against sin. For further information of the four living creatures click or tap [Topics in Revelation](#) and select the title: Four Living Creatures.

Harps: (v8) the following verses show that harps and other musical instruments were used to praise and worship the LORD:

- David and all Israel were rejoicing before God with all their might, with song and lyres and harps and tambourines and cymbals and trumpets. (1 Chron. 13:8).
- David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. (1 Chron. 15:16).
- All the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, their sons and kinsmen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, stood east of the altar with 120 priests who were trumpeters; ¹³and it was the duty of the trumpeters and singers to make themselves heard in unison in praise and thanksgiving to the LORD, and when the song was raised, with trumpets and cymbals and other musical instruments, in praise to the LORD. (2 Chronicles 5:12-14).
- At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. (Neh. 12:27).
- Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre; make melody to him with the harp of ten strings! (Psalm 33:2).
- Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! (Psalm 150:3).

When Solomon had finished building the House of the LORD, he assembled all the Levites, all the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and all the people of Israel, in Jerusalem. He then gathered all the singers, with cymbals, harps, lyres and other musical instruments, together with one hundred and twenty priests who were trumpeters. When their song was raised to the LORD, not only were they all heard in unison praising and thanking the LORD, for His goodness and His steadfast love that endures forever, but the House of the LORD was also filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, because the glory of the LORD filled the House of God. (2 Chron. 5:1-14).

Golden bowls (vials in KJV) full of incense: (v8) (odours in KJV), the following verse shows that golden bowls signify the prayers of the faithful.

- Let my (David) prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting-up of my hands as the evening sacrifice! (Psalm 141:2).

John's vision is a picture of praise, worship and prayer being joined together and offered up to the LORD. The golden bowls full of odours is an allusion to the praise and worship of God joined with instruments of music and frankincense, being offered up to God in the Old Testament temple. Throughout Scripture incense is a common symbol of prayer. The perfumed fragrance symbolises the heart felt prayers of supplication, confession and thanksgiving of the faithful that arises from the love in their hearts toward Christ and ascends to God as a sweet-smelling fragrance. Here the bowls of incense being held in the hands of the twenty-four elders before the throne of God and the presence of the Lamb not only signify every prayer, of all the faithful throughout all generations that rose-up from an agonising heart, but also embraces every sigh of the struggling Christian mingled with prayers of praise, triumph and thanksgiving, especially those prayers that mourn over sin and pray for Christ's return.

The opening of the seven seals means that the bowls containing these prayers of the faithful would be answered. In revelation chapter three an angel with a golden censer is pictured offering incense of all the prayers of the faithful (i.e., the saints) on the golden altar before God's throne (Rev. 8:3). The representation there is, that the service of the angel is to present the prayers of the faithful that were offered on earth before the throne. The allusion would be to the temple service, and to the fact that incense was offered by the priest in the temple at the time that the people offered prayer in the courts of the temple.

- According, to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. (Luke 1:9-10).

The idea is, that the representatives of the church in heaven (signified by the twenty-four elders) are offering incense before the throne of God in the heavenly temple above on behalf of the church still on earth, while it is engaged in prayer. It is a beautiful representation that the prayers of adoration, praise and thanksgiving that the faithful pray and offer up on earth ascends into the Most Holy Place above before the throne of the Almighty Holy God and are acceptable to Him. The whole verse signifies the prayers, praises and adorations, that God should have from his ministers and people, for raising His Son up to be the head of His church, and making him their Saviour High Priest and King.

REVELATION 5:9-10

You Ransomed a People for God; You are Worthy to Open the Seals.

- **Revelation 5:9-10:** And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe (out of every kindred in KJV) and language and people and nation, ¹⁰and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

The words, "You were slain," clearly show that the title, the Lamb refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who was slain and rose from the grave. The fruit that resulted from his death and resurrection for all mankind was deliverance from the curse and guilt of the law and deliverance from the power of sin to death.

They sung a new song: (v9) no one in the Old Testament could bless God for the redemption of mankind by the blood of Christ. His death and resurrection was veiled to them, they could only rejoice in hope of embracing the promises seen afar off by the eyes of faith. This new song applies to the twenty-four elders as the representatives of the whole (Old and New Testament) resurrected church, and not to the living creatures. It is called a new song for the following two reasons:

1. It is a song that no other had sung prior to the host of heaven saying, "Thou art worthy to take the scroll," which carries the idea that he is

not only worthy to open the seven seals of the scroll, but is also able to reveal and bring to pass God's hidden plans and purposes for the world and the church that are contained in the scroll.

2. This new song has lyrics that the Old Testament songs of worship could not have, it is in this sense that it is referred to as a new song. The focus of this new song is on a new event and a new theme, which is redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and his worthiness to open the seven-sealed scroll, in contrast to the old Testament song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red sea. Though the Song of Moses was held in the heart of all Jews with great esteem, honour and fame, this new song surpasses all its excellency, virtue and fame.

Songs of adoration and praise have always been sung in heaven; but prior to Christ death on the bloodstained cross of Calvary and his resurrection the focus was upon praising God for the wonders and beauties of creation and the triumphant victories God gave Israel over their enemies. Now the focus of this new song, is different it is a song that could never have been sung prior to Christ's death, and is a song that will forever continue to be new in the heart and sung afresh by all who are touched by the Redeemers love. It is Christ's suffering and great victory over death which inspires the song, and makes the faithful sing, "Thou art worthy."

NOTE: the statement, "no one could learn this song," does not mean that no one could learn the words, as anyone can learn the words of a song, but means that no one could perceive the spirit of the song, the grace it carried or its saving power except those who had tasted and experienced its goodness.

No one was worthy: carries the following three ideas:

1. No one was worthy to open the seven seals, because of the fearful terrors contained in them.
2. No one else was, able to approach the brilliant and radiant glory of the Almighty Holy God who was seated on throne and had the scroll in His right hand.
3. During the Roman era, many were nailed to a cross, but only Jesus the Son and Lamb of God was worthy to lay his life down so that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:16) and for this reason only he was worthy to approach the throne of God and take the seal from His right hand

These are not the only reasons Jesus was counted worthy, but they are the most prominent, notable and remarkable. It is the amazing wonder that the Son of God would lay down his life for sinners that grateful heartfelt feelings arise up from the heart of the redeemed in praise and worship. Jesus who died to save the sinner and ransom them with his blood has performed a work which no other being in the universe was, able to do, and for this reason is truly worthy to open the seals and to receive all honour in heaven and on earth.

Out of every kindred: (v9) means out of all humanity.

You made them a kingdom and priests: (v10) Jesus has made those who are redeemed kings and priests for God's service and honoured them with the freedom to dwell in his presence and reign together with him on earth as his friends. God's plans and purposes for the Christian faith will prevail through all generation, while the faithful who have passed courageously through their trials on earth will, at the appointed time, be raised to glory and share the honours of Christ's triumphant Kingdom in the new heavens and new earth to come. This Kingdom and reign is the final, outcome of Christ's work. Every aspect of Christianity is influenced, touched and affected by the power of the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is by the presence of this power that:

- We are Christians and our hearts are filled with love for him and his love flows toward us.
- We conquer the world, sin and death.
- We are made a kingdom and priests to God in this present world and in the future Kingdom of Christ to come upon earth.
- We desire to set our minds upon a path that brings honour to God and a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- We are made the Bride of Christ without spot and blemish.
- We will reign on the earth with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The opening of the first seal begins God's judgments to come upon the world and the harlot church spoken of in the final chapters of this book. These judgments prepare the way for Christ's return in glory and the establishing of his Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth.

- Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5-6).
- You have made them (all who are redeemed) a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth." (Rev. 5:10).

REVELATION 5:11-14

All Creatures in Heaven, Earth and the Sea, give Glory to the Lamb.

13

- **Revelation 5:11-14:** Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, ¹²saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" ¹³And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" ¹⁴And the four living creatures (four beasts in KJV) said, "Amen!" and the elders fell down and worshiped.

One of the four creatures, is on the north side, one on the east side, one on the south side and one on the west side, signifying the four corners of the earth which refers to all the earth, or all the universe as it can embrace both. It is likely that there were also three of the twenty-four elders on each side of the throne which would also signifying the entire globe of the earth. Surrounding all of these are Myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands of angels. It is not the voice of the living creatures or of the elders, but the voice of the myriads of angels that John hears. It is as if the angels are overwhelmed with wonder and joy as they look upon God who is seated on the throne and see the Lamb and the four living creatures on each side of the throne (Rev. 4:6) and the twenty-four elders, symbolising the global church made up of Jews and Gentiles in Christ.

Ten thousand times ten thousand: (v11) the expression, "ten thousand times ten thousand," seems to be taken from the following verses:

- A stream of fire issued and came out from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. (Dan. 7:10).
- The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary. (Psalm 68:17).

Ten thousand times ten thousand is one hundred million, this is a general term to signify either a countless number, or an exceedingly great number. It implies that the number specified was too large to comprehend, it is not to be taken literally, but is simply used to express the countless throng of the innumerable company of angels which raised the song, worthy is the Lamb (v12).

- You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering. (Heb. 12:22).

This praise begins before the opening of the first seal, but it continues, on and into to eternity.

The four living creatures said, "Amen," (four beasts in KJV) the four living creatures give their approval to what the angels and every creature said, concerning the worthiness of the Lamb who was slain, to receive power, wealth, wisdom, might, honour, glory and blessing and confirm that their desire was that it would all be so. They give the last and final response and then the elders fall-down and worship, showing that the faithful will forever adore and praise the Lamb in heaven for their eternal redemption, who delivered them from sin and death and set them apart for himself by his blood. While the angels will praise God for His creation and His great mercy and grace revealed in His plan of salvation that He purposed in His eternal mind before the world began. The redeemed will forever offer up their highest praises and adoration for the Lamb who was slain for them and made all the eternal majestic glory they have possible. In these verses of praise the whole universe, is represented as being in a state of profound adoration, waiting for the seven seals to be opened and the events contained in them to begin. All, are gathered around the throne with the most reverential posture and attitude, awaiting the revelation of the great mysteries contained in the scroll.

Following are truths we learn from this chapter:

- The knowledge of the future that was with God in a seven-sealed scroll held in his right hand, is now revealed to us.
- There is an impenetrable veil over the human mind (which even the world's greatest surgeon cannot remove) that hides all future joys, sorrows, troubles and hardships from our view and because of this, it is beyond the ability for man, angel or any created being to see into the future. The only things we can know for certain concerning future events to come is what is about to be revealed to us in this seven-sealed scroll.
- It is natural that we are mentally and emotionally affected at certain times by the fact we cannot see into the future, John was so affected by the reality that he may never know what was contained in the scroll, that he wept.
- The power of revealing future events to take place in the latter days and to make known as much as God wants to reveal was committed to the Redeemer (v4) and is now revealed to us in the following chapters.
- The Lamb opens the seven sealed scrolls, not for himself, but for the encouragement and joy of the church.
- It is impossible for the faithful not to be filled with joy and gratitude when they see what the Saviour has revealed, concerning their future hope and glorious eternal inheritance and triumphant end.
- The angels' great interest in the church, its growth and its success and future triumph is one of the major reasons that the future events revealed in the seven scrolls excites them to praise.
- All of creation has an interest in the revelations contained in the scrolls and all the world, the universe and the host of heaven will be affected by them.

- All creation, angels and humans have one and the same God, but not all will be treated in the same way, some will be saved and rewarded, others will be judged and condemned.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

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