

## **A Vision of the Lamb, Part 3**

### **Revelation 5:8–14**

**And while we do not know the time of the end, we must say that it could be any time near and its next.**

**Chapter 5, verse 1 “And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals.”.**

**“Who will take the scroll now on My behalf, and enact what is written in it, and take back what is rightfully Mine?”**

**Verse 2 says, “And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, ‘Who is worthy to open the scroll and to break its seals? Who is fit to do this?’ And no one in heaven” – Verse 3 – “or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it.” No one had the ability, and no one had the worthiness.**

**Verse 4 “And I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.”**

**Verse 5 “Behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David.”**

**Verse 6 “And I saw between the throne” “with the four living creatures and the elders who were all mingled there on. In the middle of all of that” – verse 6 – “a Lamb was standing.**

**Verse 7, “He came and He took out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne the little scroll.**

**That moment is the most significant moment yet in human history, the moment when Jesus Christ takes the little scroll and begins to inaugurate the recovery of the lost universe, lost to sin, Satan, death, and hell.**

**And when He takes the scroll, it is for the purpose of unrolling it. And as He unrolls it and breaks the seals, chapter 6 begins to unfold the judgments.**

**All the beings in the universe break out in praise. Verse 8 says, “And when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures” – that is the cherubim, the four living beings – “and the twenty-four elders” – you remember they represent the redeemed and raptured church – “fell down before the Lamb.”**

**“When He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb having each one a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”**

**In the text here I would prefer to take the phrase “having each one a harp” to refer directly to the twenty-four elders.**

**Chapter 15, verse 2, “I saw, as it were, a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who would come off victorious from the beast and from his image and from the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses.”**

The twenty-four elders have harps. What is the intent of that? Listen carefully. The harp or the lyre, another kind of stringed instrument, is regularly in Scripture associated with prophesying. It is regularly associated with prophesying.

**1 Samuel 10:5, “And it shall come to pass when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high places with a psaltery and a harp before them; and they shall prophesy. And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man.”**

So, the prophets will come, and they will come with harps, and harps are then associated with their prophecy.

**2 Kings 3:15 – ‘But now bring me a minstrel.’ And it came to pass, when the minstrel played upon his harp, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. And he said, ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”**

Somehow God ordained that in the sounding of those notes and in the plucking of those strings and in the making of melody, His Spirit would move.

What is the harp there for? Not only to accompany worship, but to symbolize all of prophecy, to symbolize all the prophecy, all the revelation that God had given, promising and describing the great events about to take place.

All the Scripture that had ever been given regarding the end, all the prophecies that had ever been made regarding the end, the future, the final return of Messiah, the building of the kingdom, the judgment of the ungodly, all that Scripture had ever said about the end is symbolized with the harps, for they become the symbols not only of praise, but of prophecy.

These kinds of golden bowls, according to Zechariah 14:20 were used at the altar. And so, we conclude then that these golden bowls symbolized the priestly work of intercession for the people. They were symbols of the priestly function .Notice, they were full of incense. Incense was burned to send a fragrance upward.

The Old Testament priests burned incense because it symbolized prayer rising to God fragrantly.

**Psalm 141:2 “May my prayer be counted as incense before You.”**

**Luke Chapter 1 verse 8: “It came about while Zacharias” – who was the husband of Elizabeth, the father of John the Baptist – “was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.”**

The bowls and the incense represent the prayers of all the saints through all the ages, that the promised redemption might come.

There was a tremendous eagerness on the part of the saints in the past, and there is today and there will be in the future, that the kingdom come.

**“Pray like this: Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”**

And while there is a contemporary and immediate fulfillment to that kind of prayer in the spiritual sense, there is also an eschatological sense in which we are praying for the end and the final redemption and glory of God.

The prayers of the saints, by the way, become a major theme through the book of Revelation. .

**Chapter 6, verse 10 . “They’re crying with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” .**

**Verse 9 “And they sang a new song.”** Their hope based on the promises and their prayers. Their hope based on the promises and their prayers.

And so, the twenty-four elders sing this new song. It’s a new day, and it’s a song of redemption. It’s a song that they know personally because they have been redeemed. They are joined by the four living creatures, for sure.

And in whatever way angels express themselves by saying, or if they at this particular time learn how to sing as they once did, in either case, they join them for this glorious, final thrust of music that finds its way all the way down to the end of the chapter.

Psalm 33, Psalm 40, Psalm 96, Psalm 91, Psalm 144, Psalm 149, and elsewhere. When God saves somebody, it brings a new song. And here is even a new, new song, as they anticipate the final, full, glorious redemption.

**Chapter 14 Verse 3 “They sang a new song before the throne and before the living beings and the elders; and no one could learn this song except one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.”**

**Isaiah 42:9, “Now behold, the former things have come to pass, now I declare new things. Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing His praise from the end of the earth, you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, you islands and those that dwell on them! Let the wilderness and its cities lift up their voices, the settlements where Kedar inhabits. Let the inhabitants of Sela sing aloud. Let them shout for joy from the tops of the mountains. Let them give glory to the Lord, and declare His praise and the coastlands. The Lord will go forth like a warrior, and He will arouse His zeal like a man of war. He will utter a shout; yes, He will raise a war cry. He will prevail against His enemies.”**

The song says this, and I know you know these words: **“Worthy art Thou to take the book”** – or the scroll – **“and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”**

**“Worthy art Thou to take the scroll.”** Who is worthy? The Lamb, who is the Lion, who is the Root of David, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why is He worthy? **“For Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”**

**Worthy art Thou to take the book”** – or the scroll – **“and to break its seals, for Thou wast slain and did purchase us, us.”** **“Redeemed us to God by Your blood,”** says, for example, the **New King James Version.**

And it’s appropriate then to include from the context standpoint **“us,”** because they’re saying **“You purchased us. You redeemed us to God by Your blood.”**

If that indeed is the case, and if the majority of manuscripts are right, even though the New American Standard doesn’t include it, if the rest are right, it strengthens the idea that the twenty-four elders indeed represent the raptured church; and that, of course, would strengthen a pretribulation rapture. Angels have never experienced redemption, so the angels can’t sing, **“You’ve redeemed us.”**

The extent of the redemption then is given, **Verse 9**, “**from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**”

Jesus Christ shed His blood for the whole world. “**God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.**”

He provided a universal redemption, but only some enjoy its reality, “**some out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.**”

These four terms, “every tribe and tongue and people and nation,” occur five times in Revelation, and they always refer to all of humanity, just a general sense of all of humanity.

And then **Verse 10** adds the result of such redemption: “**And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.**”

Something noted, by the way, in **Chapter 1 verse 6**; and also in **chapter 20, verse 6**. **We are a kingdom and priest.**

What is a kingdom? A community of saints under sovereign rule. He is our King. We're not part of a kingdom, we are a kingdom.

**First Corinthians 4:8**, “**You're already filled, you've already become rich, you have become kings without us. I would indeed you had become kings.**”

**Chapter 3 verse 21** “**All believers are granted to sit down with Me on My throne.**”



**We will be a kingdom of kings, and we will reign over the earth. We will be royalty forever, reigning with our ruling Christ on the earth, and reigning throughout eternity in the new heaven and the new earth.**

**And then he adds, “and priests to our God.” We will be priests as well. That signifies complete access to God’s presence. The priests had complete access to God’s presence, for worship, for praise, for service. We will be royalty, and we will be priesthood.**

**Verse 11: “And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living beings and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands.”**

**“I looked, and I heard, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne.”**

**And they join the praise, Verse 12. Now notice, when the angels come in, does it say they sang? What does it say? “They say with a loud voice.”**

**Verse 12: “Saying with a loud voice.” And this is an interesting thought: they can only echo the song of redemption. They can’t initiate it, it’s not their song.**

**Please remind yourself again that the emphasis is on His death as a perfect redemption, and so He must be given worship and praise and adoration. “He is worthy because He was slain, to be given power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”**

**But for men and angels, He is worthy to receive all this praise.**

**“You are to receive an accolade for Your power, an accolade for Your riches and Your wisdom and Your might and Your honor and Your glory, and the tremendous blessing that flows from You.”**

**Those are seven qualities true of the Lamb and true of God. And they are intrinsic to the person of God and the person of the Lamb. He doesn't have to receive them, He is them. They aren't given to Him, they are Him. And all we can do is praise Him for what He is. All this greatness the Lamb possesses; and He is worthy.**

**Verse 13 the whole creation joins: “And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them.”**

**Every being, the whole creation has been groaning, Romans 8 says, and now it explodes in praise. The whole created universe is now on the brink of its anticipated glory.**

**“All these other beings say,” – because singing, as I said, belongs to the redeemed – “To Him who sits on the throne,” “and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” Endless blessing, endless honor, endless praise.**

**Verse 14: “And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen. Amen. Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped.”**

**“Amen” is a solemn confirmation. It means “let it be, let it be, let it be,” “make it happen, make it happen.”**