
THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Lesson #3 (29 January 2016): Revelation 4-5 God and the Lamb: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain”

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INTRODUCTION

After writing about the opening vision of the majesty of Christ in chapter 1, John then penned the messages to the seven churches in chapters 2-3. Their contemporary issues are nearly the end of the ‘present tense’ in the book. Most of the rest of the book takes place in John’s future—and much of it in ours—but with the same message as before: Don’t worry, “hold fast,” God will win this war, not matter how it looks today.

These two chapters set the stage for the rest of the story because they show John’s audience why they can have faith in God. One author calls it “the fulcrum of Revelation.”¹ Imagine a predominantly Gentile audience who has been raised in a culture that feared capricious gods and never knew what they were going to do. They were taught to pray to many gods because you never knew which one was listening or would answer. They knew that the gods saw them more as slaves than children and would just as soon harm or kill them than bless them.

John’s vision of who God and Christ are show them as powerful, unchanging Gods, dedicated to the salvation of those who worship them—their children. Their love, trustworthiness, and self-sacrifice for us allows us to have faith in them, believe their promises, and trust that all things truly will work out for our benefit.

The action of going up into the heavenly temple and being in the presence of the Father adds great drama to the story. The sights and sounds John witnesses are stunning, full of meaning, and rich in pathos. He experiences joy and exultation, deep sorrow when the plan of the Father appears at risk, and eternal gratitude when one steps forward to execute it. Finding and identifying the one worthy to do the Father’s will and praising them both for their acts in our behalf are the main points of these verses.

OUTLINE

There are many ways to outline any book, and Revelation is no exception. Below are the lessons in this series with chapter summaries. For the lesson in these notes, the chapter is broken down into more detailed sections and bolded.

1. The Majesty of Christ (1:1-20)
2. The Messages to the Seven Churches (2:1 – 3:22)
3. **God and the Lamb**
 - a. **The Vision of Heaven (4:1-11)**
 - b. **The Sealed Book and the Worthy Lamb (5:1-14)**
4. The Scroll Begins to Open
 - a. The Six Seals (6:1-17)
 - b. The Seal of the Living God (7:1-17)
5. The Opening of the Seventh Seal
 - a. The Seventh Seal and the First Four Trumpets (8:1-13)
 - b. The Great War (9:1-21)
6. John’s Mission; Two Prophets
 - a. The Little Scroll (10:1-11)
 - b. The Seventh Trumpet (11:1-19)
7. The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon
 - a. The Church and the Devil (12:1-18)
 - b. The Beasts of Revelation (13:1-18)
8. Judgment and Praise
 - a. The Winepress of the Wrath of God (14:1-20)
 - b. The Seven Angels (15:1-8)

¹ Smalley, 141.

9. Seven Last Plagues and Babylon the Great
 - a. The Seven Bowls (16:1-21)
 - b. Babylon the Great (17:1-18)
10. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb
 - a. The Fall of Babylon (18:1-24)
 - b. The King of Kings (19:1-21)
11. Heirs of the Celestial Glory
 - a. The Thousand Years (20:1-15)
 - b. The New Jerusalem (21:1-27)
 - c. Blessed Are They That Do His Commandments (22:1-21)

GOD AND THE LAMB (4:1 – 5:1-14)

Now the revelation shifts gears with a new vision and perspective, though John and the Lord carried forward many of the metaphors already introduced in the first three chapters. With these chapters, the vision moves into the heavens, right into the throne room of the Father. Throughout the rest of the book, John’s view will shift between earth and heaven, as if the Lord is offering him sober truth alternating with divine comfort.

Sadly, one of the messages of John’s vision is that the first century church will fail—that is, she will go into hiding for a time until conditions are right for her to return and make herself known. This does not mean there were not good, strong, faithful Christians in those early centuries; John’s vision, in fact, shows that there were. It does mean, however, that “there simply was not enough overall righteousness to stop the apostasy.”²

But the important long-term message is that this short-term failure is just a temporary setback and that God’s plan to save as many of his children as possible works patiently and appropriately in the history of the world to bring truth to all who will receive it. God’s full victory will happen, we can trust.

THE VISION OF HEAVEN (4:1-11)

The message of chapter 4 is that God the Father is the sovereign Lord of the universe, though John carefully never portrays God himself. Instead, John describes his attributes through various symbols. The whole chapter parallels Ezekiel 1 and has elements of Exodus 19. D&C 77 is the key to understanding many images in this chapter. It portrays a God who is surrounded by his creations, those he exalts and who therefore eternally praise him and give him glory. He is life and death and he is victory and power. This image is one of the

heavenly council, where God surrounds himself with “angelic beings and lesser deities” and the divine will is made known, often to prophets who are invited to watch and learn.³

4:1 **After this**. Denotes a passage of time, though unknown how much. Regardless, it’s a new vision.

4:1 **a door was opened in heaven**. John did not see the door open but it was already “standing open” (NIV, NAS). This goes back just a few verses to the promise of Laodicea that the Lord knocks at the door, except that now by divine power the door stands open beckoning the apostle to come see. The closer parallel is thus 3:8, where the Lord sets “an open door” before the church, one that “no man can shut.” See also Ezekiel 1:1.

4:1 **as it were of a trumpet talking with me**. As in 1:10, the voice from heaven is like a *shofar* or ram’s horn, calling John to give heed and listen—and look.

4:1 **Come up hither**. John was invited into heaven to witness God’s heavenly temple and throne. Compare D&C 137:1-3 where Joseph Smith’s vision of the celestial kingdom displays a beautiful gate through which celestial heirs enter and “the blazing throne of God.”

4:1 **things which must be hereafter**. John saw future events, though first a few other things to put those in perspective. But by and large, the rest of Revelation was in John’s—and is in our—future. Note that these things “must be,” meaning they are certain to happen, not just may happen. The future is as certain with the Lord as is the past.

4:2 **immediately I was in the spirit**. Another indication that this is a new event (with “After this” in v. 1), since he was already in the Spirit before (1:10).

² Draper and Rhodes, 355.

³ Smalley, 111, cites Job 15:8; Psalm 89:6-7, and Jeremiah 23:18 as examples of the council, with Jeremiah 23:22 and Amos 3:7 as examples of prophets taking part.

4:2 **a throne was set in heaven.** The word “throne” occurs over forty times in Revelation (comprising three-fourths of all NT references⁴), with seventeen of those in these two chapters. Because the throne represents the power and authority of the one sitting on it, it is an appropriate image for these chapters of stage-setting for the rest of the book, declaring who is calling the shots and seeing that it works according to his plan. This scene was the inspiration for Handel’s *Messiah*.⁵

4:2 **one sat on the throne.** This chapter is about the Father, the next about the Son (see Psalm 47:8; Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel. 7:9-10). But John does not portray either of them except in symbolic imagery, so we learn much about who they are and nothing about how they appear.

4:3 **jasper.** Usually green, though sometimes yellow, purple, or even white. Jasper signifies “majesty, purity, and holiness.”⁶ See also 21:11, 19-20.

4:3 **sardine.** This stone, also called carnelian, is red, which represents death, war, judgment, and blood. Sardine and jasper were the first (upper right) and the last (lower left) stones in the High Priest’s ephod/breastplate, respectively, representing the tribes of Reuben (‘behold, a son’) and Benjamin (‘son of my right hand’); see Exodus 28:17-20.

4:3 **rainbow.** The rainbow and its meaning are explained in JST Genesis 9:21-25 (Appendix)—it is a representation of God’s covenant with Noah, which was a renewal of his covenant with Enoch. “John’s rainbow is ‘like unto an emerald,’ emphasizing green, the color of life. . . . Since a rainbow presents light in one of its most beautiful manifestations, a rainbow surrounding the Father is most appropriate. One aspect of eternal truth and the attributes of the Father appear to be displayed here. The rainbow has strong associations with the mercy of the Father. This is seen as early as the flood. In the midst of storm, God’s light, truth, and mercy ever bend back to the earth, touching it softly in healing wonder. Because of the nature of all that follows in Revelation, the memory and message of the

⁴ Mounce, 119.

⁵ Mounce, 120.

⁶ Draper and Rhodes, 364.

⁷ Wilcox, 49-50.

⁸ JST quotations taken from Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, and compared with Wayment for verifying the marking of differences.

encircling rainbow must be held firm in the heart’s holding place of highest aspirations.”⁷

4:3 **emerald.** This stone, also called beryl, is green, representing life. Emerald was the fourth stone in the ephod, equating to the tribe Judah, from which Jesus came. Other colors could have been in the rainbow, but green was dominant.

4:4 KJV	4:4 JST ⁸
4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.	4 And in the midst of the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

The seats John sees are not surrounding the throne but in the middle of it all. This makes the position of the elders here parallel that of v. 6, where the beasts are the ones “round about” the throne. It also indicates that God generously and graciously shares his glorious position with others.

4:4 **four and twenty elders.** See D&C 77:5, where we learn that these elders were “faithful” people that John surely knew, because they “belonged to the seven churches.” Though they “were dead,” now in this vision of heaven, John sees them exalted.⁹ Popular commentaries speculate that ‘24’ could relate to the 24 courses of Aaronic Priesthood, or 12 patriarchs + 12 apostles (to represent both the old and new covenants). The problem is the twenty-four are clearly Christian, hence D&C 77’s explanation makes the most sense and the number 24 is more likely to represent priesthood (12) multiplied to represent all the faithful.¹⁰

The seven churches know, love and respect these people. To see them exalted in God’s presence must have been thrilling and generated great hope for those still struggling with early persecutions.

⁹ Draper and Rhodes, 370, note that since was seeing into the future, these elders may yet be alive in his day, just as Joseph Smith saw his father and mother in the celestial

¹⁰ Draper and Rhodes, 370.

4:4 **clothed in white raiment.** The elders had on the clothing of purity and victory.

4:4 **crowns of gold.** Reminding us of the promise in 2:10 where the church was promised that if they endured trials they would receive a crown of life, here the elders have victory wreaths on their heads made of gold, like emperors or triumphant generals in Roman society.

4:5 KJV	4:5 JST
5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.	5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and <i>there were</i> seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven servants of God.

The JST changes “spirits” to “servants,” to represent the leaders of the churches again, as the Prophet consistently did in chapters 1-3. How appropriate to have the light of the current church leaders mingling with the glory of their previously departed, now-exalted brethren.

4:5 **lightnings and thunderings.** These evoke the image of the Lord’s presence on Sinai (Exodus 19:16).

4:5 **voices.** *Phōnai* could be speech, the shout of a crowd, the sounds of animals and birds, water, chariot wheels, a trumpet, or thunder.¹¹ The point is that besides the lightning and thunder that represents God, there is a great noise, the source of which is unknown to the prophet.

4:5 **lamps.** Not the same word as earlier chapters where it was translated “candlesticks.” Here it is *lampades* or ‘torches.’ The candlesticks/lampstands (*luchnia*) of chapter 1 were the churches (1:20) while the torches here represent the same seven church leaders as did the stars in chapter 1.

4:6 KJV	4:6 JST
6 And before the throne <i>there was</i> a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne,	6 And before the throne <i>there was</i> a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne

and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

were the four and twenty elders; and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

As with v. 4, the elders were nearest the throne, seated on their seats of honor, while the symbolic beasts are around all of them.

4:6 **sea of glass.** See D&C 77:1; 88:24-26; and 130:6-9. Everything in the earth and the universe is revealed through this sanctified and immortal new earth. Compare to Ezekiel 1:22.

4:6 **four beasts.** *Zōa*, or ‘living creatures,’ contrasted with *thēlion*, which means ‘wild beasts’ (the word used in chapters 13 and 17). Ezekiel sees similar creatures in his vision (Ezekiel 1:6-10). What are these creatures? There are many, many interpretations (one author lists twenty-one¹²); but see D&C 77:2-3 for the inspired response: they are “figurative expressions” to describe “the paradise of God, the happiness of man, and of beasts.” Each is a “spiritual being in the likeness of that which is temporal,” or in other words, “four individual beasts...to represent the glory of the classes of beings in their destined order” enjoying “eternal felicity.”

Joseph Smith taught that the beasts may have “lived on another planet than ours.”¹³ He also declared, “Says one, ‘I cannot believe in the salvation of beasts.’ Any man who would tell you that this could not be, would tell you that the revelations are not true. John heard the words of the beasts giving glory to God, and understood them. God who made the beasts could understand every language spoken by them. The four beasts were four of the most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect; they were like angels in their sphere. We are not told where they came from, and I do not know; but they were seen and heard by John praising and glorifying God.”¹⁴

Jewish synagogues often had windows with pictures of the twelve tribes’ symbols, so these were very familiar to Jews of John’s day. The four beasts were also representative of all of creation, standing for wild and

¹¹ Danker, 1071.

¹² Cited by Mounce, 124.

¹³ Parry and Parry, 61, quoting from Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 171.

¹⁴ *Teachings*, 291-292.

domestic animals, man, and fowls of the air. They also acted as guardians of the throne of God, like cherubim.¹⁵

4:7 **lion**. This brings to mind wild places and wild animals; it represents the tribe of Judah (who had the right to rule).

4:7 **calf**. Better translated as ‘ox.’ This stands for cultivated places and domestic animals; it is the tribe of Ephraim (who had the birthright), and symbolizes royalty, sacrifice, atonement, and covenant.

4:7 **face as a man**. “Face” is *prosōpon*, potentially meaning not just the face of a man but the appearance of a man.¹⁶ This represents cities and towns, and intelligence, and is the tribe of Reuben (the firstborn).

4:7 **eagle**. This is the heavens, the air, and the winged creatures that live and prey on others there; it is the tribe of Dan (the seventh son).

4:8 **full of eyes within**. They had eyes on their bodies and under their wings.

4:8 **wings . . . eyes** See D&C 77:4, where the eyes represent “light and knowledge” and the wings “power, to move, to act, etc.” Wings also suggest that they are swift to carry out the will of God and eyes that they see all things that God does in the universe.¹⁷

4:8 **Holy, holy, holy**. The triple repetition of the word *hagios* states powerfully the nature of the being on the throne—he is consecrated, pure, dedicated, and sacred. Compare Isaiah 6:3 where that prophet heard a seraph in the temple give the same triple praise of the Lord, declaring that he is “Holy, holy, holy” and “the whole earth is full of his glory.” It may be related to the concept introduced earlier that God is, was, and is to come (1:4).

4:9 KJV	4:9 JST
9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,	9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sits on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

The same change is made in 4:10 and 5:1, indicating that the Father not only sat on the throne in John’s vision but continues to sit on it, even in our day,

¹⁵ Draper and Rhodes, 379.

¹⁶ Danker, 887-888 notes that it could be a personal presence or appearance, represented by the face of the person.

receiving praise of his exalted children and creations and acting in behalf of the same.

4:10 **fall down before him**. The twenty-four elders fall prostrate to the ground and show reverence and respect to him on the throne. To “worship” is to fall at his feet and kiss them.¹⁸ The three verbs in this verse—“fall,” “worship,” and “cast”—are all in the future tense in Greek, indicating that this particular set of events is not happening in John’s immediate vision but is promised to happen one day, when all will fall before God and declare him just, worthy, and God Almighty.

4:10 **cast their crowns**. The elders did this to acknowledge the source of their victory and blessings. When we become gods, out of gratitude and love, we will present our creations to our Father, adding to his glory, honor, and power.

4:11 **Thou art worthy**. This is what was shouted when the emperor came in triumphal procession. Christians would find that governmental use of this phrase blasphemous because only God is worthy. In Revelation, it is correctly applied to God our Father.

4:11 **for thy pleasure**. Or, “By your will” (NIV); also, “because of you” (NASB). “Creation came about by the operation of God’s will; but the universe came into being through him precisely so that his holy purposes for humanity could be accomplished.”¹⁹ This phrase thus carries both the method and purpose of creation; see D&C 88:19-20.

THE SEALED BOOK AND THE WORTHY LAMB (5:1-14)

Though we saw the Father on his throne in chapter 4 and are astounded at the powerful images of his attributes, he makes no action or movement in John’s portrayal. Action is delegated to the character dramatically introduced in chapter 5, who carries out the Father’s plan. As the message shifts to the Lion who is also the Lamb of God, we see him as the only one who is worthy, by virtue of his sacrifice, to open the sealed book that has the Father’s plans. The seals are not opened until chapters 6-8, but this chapter allows us to have certainty that they will be, because of the one who is prepared to do so. As chapter 4 and Ezekiel 1 are

¹⁷ Smalley, 122; Mounce 125.

¹⁸ Mounce, 126.

¹⁹ Smalley, 125.

closely aligned, so chapter 5 and Ezekiel 2 have many parallels.

5:1 **And I saw**. John explained the various symbols that surrounded and represented the Father in chapter 4, but until this point, had not noticed what was in the Father's hand. Now like a camera zooming in on the image, he sees his right hand and something in it.

5:1 **in the right hand**. The right hand has a number of symbolic meanings in scripture, including righteousness (Psalm 48:10), power (Exodus 15:6; Isaiah 48:13), strength and support (Psalm 16:8; 18:35; 20:6; 44:3; 63:8; 73:23; 139:10; Isaiah 41:10), covenant making (Isaiah 62:8), justice (Exodus 15:12; 3 Nephi 29:4, 9), judgment (Psalm 91:7), giving the law (Deuteronomy 33:2), joy (Psalm 16:11), and salvation (Psalm 17:7).²⁰

5:1 **a book**. Greek *biblion*, meaning a papyrus or parchment scroll. D&C 77:6-7 explains that this scroll "contains the revealed will, mysteries, and the works of God; the hidden things of his economy concerning this earth during the seven thousand years of its continuance, or its temporal existence."

5:1 **written within and on the backside**. Technically called an episthograph.²¹ If on papyrus, it was written *recto* (papyrus strips horizontal, easy to write on) and *verso* (strips vertical, harder to write on). If it was parchment, then it was written on the skin side (easier to write on) and the hair side (the hair is gone but it is more difficult to write on). The point is that the scroll contains so much information that the entire thing is covered with writing and not any part of it is left blank. This compares to Ezekiel 2:9-10, where that prophet also saw a scroll from heaven written on both sides.

5:1 **seven seals**. A signet ring stamped in wax produced a seal, typically used by kings or high officials to verify their documents when having them delivered remotely. Seven seals perhaps related to the custom of that day of having seven witnesses at the signing of important documents like wills who then bind/tie and seal the document. The purposes of sealing them up included keeping them secret until they were delivered to the right people, or to create a copy that could be preserved in a sealed (unchanged) state if it was needed for comparison or consultation later, such as if there was a

contractual disagreement (Jeremiah 32:9-15 describes such a document). Seven seals also mean that the document was perfectly sealed, and that God's will cannot be defeated.

Joseph Smith explained, "We are to understand that the first seal contains the things of the first thousand years, and the second also of the second thousand years, and so on until the seventh" (D&C 77:7). This is not so much a statement as to the age of the earth but as a representation of God's involvement in the history of mankind throughout the age of the earth (seven thousand years representing the completeness of a long period of time), just as the creation is represented in seven days in Genesis 1 but was actually a much longer period of time.

5:2 KJV	5:2 JST
2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?	2 And I saw a strong angel and heard him proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

John's witness is enhanced by the JST change of both seeing and hearing the angel. It also matches the sense of 6:1 where he both saw and heard as the first seal was opened, which is the resolution of the angel's question posed in this verse. See also 5:11; 8:13; and especially 22:8.

5:2 **strong angel**. "Strong" is *ischyron*, meaning mighty, powerful, impressive, or loud.²² The angel that asks the question that no one immediately answers does so with power and authority, in a voice that everyone hears, yet by his very question, we know that he himself is not worthy, in spite of his own high status. This angel or another of similar stature appears in 10:1 and 18:1.

5:2 **Who is worthy to open the book**. "Worthy" is *axios*, which refers to a balance scale. The one the angel is searching for to open the seals has done something that tips the scales in his favor. The person must be worthy not just to open it but to act on the information contained inside, to make it happen.

5:3 **no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth**. The search spans the entire universe—heaven

²⁰ Some of the references from Draper and Rhodes, 395.

²¹ Smalley, 128.

²² Danker, 483-484.

where God dwells, earth with all mortals, and Hades/Sheol where the dead reside.

5:3 **look thereon.** Or, “even look inside it” (NIV).

5:4 **I wept much, because no man was found worthy.** John greatly desired to know the contents of the book—and was promised that knowledge in 4:1—but not the righteous elders, the powerful angel, nor anyone else presented themselves as someone worthy to do so. “John’s sorrow is not from thwarted curiosity about the contents of the book.”²³ Rather, he is devastated that God’s plans for mankind (Moses 1:39) might not be fulfilled.

5:5 **one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not.** One of the twenty-four men from the churches, someone John probably knew, gently offered comfort and words of hope to the grieving John. He helps John again through the vision in 7:13.

5:5 **The Lion of the tribe of Juda.** From Genesis 49:9-10 where Judah is associated with a lion, the kings of Judah used the lion as their symbol. Since Jesus was from the royal line of the tribe of Judah, the lion is also a symbol for him.

5:5 **Root of David.** The “root of David” is from Isaiah 11:10 (David being the son of Jesse); see also Romans 15:12 and D&C 113:5-6. The D&C verses certainly apply to Christ, teaching that he is also a descendent of Joseph (messiah ben Joseph). Many also think the symbol applies to Joseph Smith, which is appropriate, given the description.

5:5 **hath prevailed to open the book.** “Prevailed” here is the same word used in chapters 2-3 in the invitations to the churches: “overcometh,” pointing to victory. The Lion of Judah and Root of David has already been victorious and is thus worthy to loosen the seals and open the book in the Father’s right hand.

5:6 KJV	5:6 JST
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	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 twelve horns and twelve eyes, which are the

²³ Wilcox, 57.

Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

twelve servants of God sent forth into all the earth.

In changing seven to twelve and the “Spirits” to “servants,” the Prophet ties the image of the Savior to the symbolism of the quorum of the Twelve that he called during his ministry to assist him in taking the gospel to all the world (see Matthew 28:19). It also amplifies the images of the horns and eyes to not just be complete but total priesthood power and knowledge.

5:6 **stood a Lamb as it had been slain.** As with the twenty-four elders, John turns his attention “in the midst of the throne” and now sees an amazing site: the promised Lion appears instead as a lamb, something a lion would kill and eat. But this is not just any lamb; it is one that bares the marks of death—marks in its hands, feet, side, perhaps neck—and yet is alive; even though it was killed, it now stood, risen from death.

A lion was the messiah the Jews were expecting—a strong conqueror to defeat their enemies. But the lamb was instead what really came in their day—a humble and willing follower, tied back to the Passover covenant and sacrifice, and the messianic prediction of Isaiah 53:7. Because he was first the lamb and willingly died, he became the lion. “Lamb” is the title used often in Revelation for the Savior, used twenty-eight times.²⁴

5:6 **seven horns and seven eyes.** Seven represents perfection. As mentioned above, the JST says “twelve” for both, tying the imagery of priesthood, apostles, and the right to govern to the horns and eyes.

5:6 **horns.** Horns represent power and strength. The altar in the temple had horns on the corners to represent the power of the Atonement to forgive and change lives (Exodus 27:2). In other Biblical prophecies, animals with horns represented kingdoms and earthly powers (Daniel 7:7-11, 24; 8:20-21; Zechariah 1:18-21).

5:6 **eyes.** Eyes are symbolic of vision and knowledge and light; see note on 4:8 above.

5:6 **Spirits.** The JST changes this to “servants” (footnote b), probably meaning the twelve apostles; they are eyes because Christ ‘sees’ the Church through their eyes.

²⁴ Mounce, 133.

5:7 **took the book.** Christ received his mission and authority from the Father, whom he obeys perfectly.

5:8 **when he had taken the book.** At the moment Jesus took the book, everyone knew the Father's plan would be a success and that God would win, so the weeping of verse 4 turns into songs of praise and joy. A "new song" for the latter days was revealed in D&C 84:98-102.

5:8 **elders fell down before the Lamb.** The instantaneous reaction of the elders who sit in an exalted state in the midst of the Father is to fall down in worship of the Lamb, who has done what no other being in the universe was able to do.

5:8 **harps.** Or, 'lyres,' instruments of the temple psalms. We don't sing in the temple much today—perhaps a shame—but the Jews did (as did early Latter-day Saints in Nauvoo), making song a major part of their temple worship. A lyre is triangle body with seven, ten, or eleven strings, played with a pick (*plectrum*), like a guitar.

5:8 **golden vials.** Greek *phialas*, meaning a broad, shallow dish or cup, used in offerings and drinking. Often rendered 'bowl' in modern translations, these were made of precious gold, like in the temple in Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 7:50, speaking of the articles used in temple worship).

5:8 **odours.** Or, "incense" (see footnote 8a), which gave off a smell that could be pleasing and cover up the odors of smell of burning sacrifices in the temple. In the heavenly temple, though they had a different purpose.

5:8 **prayers of the saints.** In Jewish temple worship, fresh incense each day was put on the altar in the holy place to represent the prayers of all Jews. See Psalm 141:2: "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense."

5:9 **they sung a new song.** In chapter 4, the Father was worthy by his creation work (4:11); here the Son is worthy by the work of redemption. See Isaiah 42:10 and Psalm 98:1, where everyone sings a new song unto the Lord (Jehovah); compare also Alma 5:26, where Alma asks if we have experienced a change of heart, have we "felt to sing the song of redeeming love" and "can [we] feel so now?"

5:9 **wast slain, and hast redeemed us.** He is worthy because he was slain, and by that act he redeemed us, meaning he bought us out of prison and paid the price of our debt. Because he freed us, we owe him a life debt and thereby become his slaves. See Acts 20:28, where Jesus has purchased us with his blood, and Hebrews 9:12, confirming it is "by his own blood." Also, 1 Corinthians 6:20, where Paul teaches that we are bought with a price.

5:9 **every kindred, tongue, people, and nation.** Every family, tribe, language, ethnic group, political organization, and more: Christ's salvation encompasses all people everywhere on earth.

5:10 **we shall reign on earth.** This is the fulfillment of Exodus 19:5-6 (he will make us a kingdom of priests, a holy nation). See also D&C 88:17-19 (God the Father will reign on the sanctified earth).

5:11 **ten thousand times ten thousand.** The number of the angels that join the beasts and elders and suddenly sing the new song and praise the Father and Son was huge. Ten thousand is *myriadōn*, the largest number available in Greek. Multiplying it by itself means the number of those saved by the Lamb is huge, too many to count.

5:12 **power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.** The uncountable crowd declares seven attributes about the Lamb that demonstrate his perfection and worthiness. These are the characteristics of perfection that allow him to open the sealed scroll and act on the will of God.

5:13 **every creature.** Now joining the voices in heaven, every living creature cried praises to Christ.

5:13 **him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.** Representing both the Father and the Son.

5:14 **the four beasts said, Amen.** The tense of "said" is imperfect, meaning they are saying it and keep saying it. They are eternally in agreement (the meaning of "Amen" with all the words of praise that have been spoken and chanted.

5:14 **worshipped.** Greek *proskuneō* in the indicative aorist tense, meaning they kiss his feet forever and ever.

CONCLUSION

Chapters 4 and 5 are the turning points for the story; everything hinges on these scenes of the Father and the Son. “With the consummate skill of an artist, John structures his material in the Revelation so as to advance his central, christological subject in a series of dramatic disclosures towards a climax.”²⁵ We see with these verses how the perfect plan to save the human race originates with the Father but cannot be carried out without the perfect sacrifice of the Lamb. In John’s vision, the Father is static and takes no action; it is the Son who makes everything happen, representing the

immeasurable debt we owe to him for our salvation.²⁶ When the Lamb is recognized for who he is and what he has done and will do, all of heaven and earth fall down to worship and acknowledge him. The rest of the book merely shows how what is recognized as already accomplished in these chapters plays out in the history of the earth, assuring John’s readers, including us today, that we can have perfect faith in God’s plan and the outcome he has promised, because the Lion/Lamb has fulfilled the plan in every way. Have faith, not fear, and hold fast!

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²⁵ Smalley, 110.

²⁶ Draper and Rhodes, 423.

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Bible versions cited (if no version is cited, it is the KJV; any translation or paraphrase in single quotes is the author's):

KJV – King James Version (Authorized Version)
JST – Joseph Smith Translation
BYU – BYU New Testament Rendition (from Draper and Rhodes)
CJB – Complete Jewish Bible
LXX – Septuagint (Greek Old Testament)
NAB – The New American Bible
NASB – New American Standard Bible
NIV – New International Version
NJB – New Jerusalem Bible
NLT – New Living Translation