

**Rev 5:1-5 (NIV)**

- 13) The scene is still the great throne room of God.
- 14) John sees a scroll in God's right hand.
- 15) This scroll plays an integral part in the remainder of the book of Revelation and as such, is the most important object of John's vision.
- 16) As we will see, all of the events of the seals, trumpets, and bowls all have their origins in the scroll.
- 17) Anyone in John's time would readily understand that the scroll was a contract.
- 18) Dr. Robert Thomas comments that  
"This kind of contract was known all over the Middle East in ancient times and was used by the Romans from the time of Nero on. The full contract would be written on the inner pages and sealed with seven seals. Then the content of the contract would be described briefly on the outside.
- 19) Coffman points out the importance of this scroll can be attributed to the fact that it is on or in God's hand.
- 20) Other things the scroll is:
  - a) contains the climax of human history, overthrow of evil and the gathering of the redeemed.
- 21) John weeps because the no one is found who is worthy to open the scroll.
- 22) Now, we have a new entity introduced into the scene.
- 23) From the messianic titles used, it is obviously the Christ.
- 24) No other creature in all the universe is capable and worthy of opening the scroll.
- 25) But John does not see Christ as the Lion or a Davidic King.
- 26) Instead, beginning in verse 6 we read >>>>

**Rev 5:6-7 (NIV)**

- 1) Once more, let's get our minds geared to interpretation of the description – not as literal but what it means to the reader in John's time.
- 2) The Greek word here for lamb, is that of a pet.
  - a) It evokes images of the Passover lamb that was kept as a part of the family (pet) for four days prior to its sacrifice.
- 3) However, the rest of the description allows us to see that this is no ordinary Lamb.
  - a) Standing – The lamb looked as though it had been slain yet, it was standing.
    - i) The scars of the deadly slaying were clearly visible, yet the creature was alive and functioning.

- b) In the next two features – Seven Horns and Seven Eyes, we have a combination of symbols.
  - i) Seven again representing fullness, perfection, and completeness.
  - ii) Horns – represent power, authority, and strength.
  - iii) Eyes – knowledge, perfect omniscience, and complete understanding.
    - (1) John further indicates here that they represent the Holy Spirit.
    - (2) The implication is that the Holy Spirit is being sent into all the earth.
    - (3) Jesus himself brings this description into what I think is clear focus in John 16:8-11

#### **John 16:8-11 (NIV)**

- 4) Verse 7 of the Revelation passage describes the final act in this heavenly scene.
- 5) Everything John has been describing starting in verse 1 of chapter 4 to this point have been building to this very event.
- 6) This is the same scene that is described in Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14.

#### **Dan 7:13-14 (NIV)**

- 7) The obvious difference between the two scenes is the mention of the scroll.
- 8) However, in the Daniel passage, we see the true connection to the content of the scroll.
  - a) As we discussed, the scroll's content is representative of the very things that Christ is given in verse 14 of the Daniel passage.
- 9) It is, in my opinion, very important that we see the significance of Christ (the Lamb) taking the scroll from God's hand.
  - a) It is the monumental act in the heavenly scene.
  - b) Everything John has been describing since this vision began in 4:1 has been building toward this moment.
  - c) This views the great, culminating act of history, the act that will signal the end of man's day.
  - d) The ultimate goal of redemption is about to be seen.
  - e) Paradise will be regained, Eden restored.

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Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse once observed that there are four things out of place in the universe: the church, which should be in heaven; Israel, which should be living in peace occupying all the land promised to her; Satan, who belongs in the lake of fire; and Christ, who should be seated on His throne reigning. All four of those anomalies will be set right when Christ takes the scroll from His Father's hand.

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10) This event is so important, so profound, and glorious that it causes praise to come from the entire universe.

### **Rev 5:8-14 (NIV)**

- 1) There are several items of importance that we should mention here.
- 2) First, we must note that the 24 elders and the 4 living creatures offer the same praise to the Lamb as they do to the Father sitting on the throne.
  - a) If nothing else, this is indicative of the triune God.
- 3) The structure of the Greek text indicates that only the 24 elders had the bowls of incense and the harps.
  - a) Harps in the old testament were frequently associated with worship but also, closely linked to prophesy.

### **1 Sam 10:5 (NIV)**

5 "After that you will go to Gibeath of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes, and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying NIV

- b) The incense in the golden bowls represent the prayers of God's people throughout the ages that the prophesied redemption of the earth might come.
  - c) Taken together, the harps and the prayers indicate that all the prophets ever prophesied, and all that God's children ever prayed for is finally to be fulfilled.
- 1) We now move to the beginning of the end of times.
- 2) Before we jump into this, I think it will be good to get a "big picture" overview of what we are going to be dealing with from here thru chapter 16.
- 3) This is the first of three 7-part judgment descriptions.
  - a) Chapter 6 and 7 are the opening of the seals,
  - b) Chapters 8 thru the beginning of 15 are the sounding of the seven trumpets,
  - c) Chapter 15:7 thru 16 deal with the pouring out of the seven bowls of God's wrath.
- 4) Each of the judgments (seals, trumpets, bowls) includes seven parts.
- 5) In each case, the first four judgments involve natural disasters on the earth; the last three are cosmic disasters.
- 6) There are three basic views of these events – Recapitulation, Consecutive, and Progressive.
- 7) Here is a synopsis of the views held about these 3 judgments from the LABC.

**Recapitulation View** – According to this view, the three sets of judgments repeat each other (are cyclical); they present three ways of viewing the same judgments. Because the trumpets and the bowls have the same order, many have concluded that the three sets are repetitive. In addition, in all three sets, the first four of the seven judgments are very similar, as are the last three of each set of seven. Exact repetition, however, occurs only in the trumpets and bowls.

**Consecutive View** – This view holds that judgments will follow in the order described in Revelation: first the seals, then the trumpets, then the bowls — in other words, Revelation is describing twenty-one separate events. Thus, chapters 6-16 in Revelation would be chronological.

**Progressive Intensification View** – The key to this view is understanding the results of the judgments. The seals destroy one-fourth of the earth; the trumpets destroy one-third; the bowls affect everything. The picture seems to be one of progressive intensity, with each of these sets of judgments ending in the same place — that is, the end of history.

These views are helpful as you consider and study the book of Revelation. While many will feel very strongly about one view or another, only God knows the truth. He left much of Revelation unclear to his people for a reason, perhaps so we'll study it and be watchful and morally alert. One truth is sure: as God prepares to end history and usher in his kingdom, he will bring judgments.

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- 8) John MacArthur seems to favor the consecutive view – he comments:
- a) Each of the scroll's seven seals (cf. 5:1) represents a specific divine judgment that will be poured out sequentially on the earth.
  - b) The seals encompass the entire period of the Tribulation (3:10), culminating with the return of Christ.
  - c) It seems best to understand the first four seals as taking place during the first half of the Tribulation.
  - d) The fifth stretching from the first into the second half, (called the "great tribulation" in 7:14 and lasting three and one-half years; 11:2; 12:6; 13:5)
  - e) The sixth and seventh taking place during that "great tribulation."
  - f) Apparently the seventh seal contains the seven trumpet judgments (8-11) and the seventh trumpet (11:15) contains the seven bowl judgments (16).
  - g) The seven seals thus contain all the judgments to the end when Jesus Christ returns.

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- 9) One of the key points to the consecutive view is, in my opinion, that the trumpets are part of the Seventh Seal, and the bowls are part of the Seventh Trumpet.
- 10) The first 4 seals deal with what you may have heard referred to as the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”.

### **Rev 6:1-2 (NIV)**

- 1) Think back to the last time you were in a thunderstorm and a flash of lighting was exceedingly close.
  - a) Remember how loud and shocking the clap of thunder was that immediately followed.
  - b) This is perhaps what the sound of the voice of the creature was that is associated with the first horseman as he said “Come!”
  - c) Unfortunately, the word in the Greek is unclear – it can literally mean come or go.
  - d) To further confound the situation, it is only used in the present and imperfect tense.
    - i) The imperfect tense is used in the indicative mood only. It often indicates a continuing situation in the past, rather than an event.
  - e) Another issue here with the word come is to whom it is addressed.
  - f) Some of your translations may have the phrase as “come and see” or possibly “behold”
    - i) According to one source, only one early manuscript had the added word for “behold” or in some translations, “look.”
    - ii) With that word in place, the creature would be addressing John.
    - iii) Without this word, it becomes more likely that the creature was addressing the horseman.
    - iv) This is the case for all of the first four seals revealing the horsemen of the Apocalypse
- 2) It was interesting to me that the Complete Jewish Bible was the only translation that I have that had the word “Go” instead of “come” for the command word here.
- 3) Beyond what I just talked about, there is much controversy and debate regarding the actual results of the opening of the first seal.
- 4) First, the rider – some have asserted that the rider is Christ, others, the antichrist.
- 5) I personally do not subscribe to either of these ideas.
  - a) Christ is the one opening the seals – unlikely that he would also be the first horseman of the Apocalypse as well.
  - b) The crown and bow described as associated with him are also not royal.
  - c) Of the two – Christ or the Antichrist, the one I would favor would be the Antichrist because, there is a false peace that comes with him.
    - i) However, he is introduced much later in our study, and I don’t feel that this is him.

- d) Finally, another compelling argument against both is that the other riders are not individuals or persons but impersonal forces (war, famine, and death).
- 6) So, if we do assume the first rider to be an “impersonal force”, what is that force.
- 7) There are at least two major thoughts regarding this idea.
  - a) First, this rider would represent conquest.
    - i) The argument here is that war, famine, and death normally follow conquest.
  - b) The second is that this rider would represent a time of peace.
    - i) Support for that argument is that there is no mention of arrows – he has a bow but no ammunition.
    - ii) Also, white (white of the horse) in addition to the joy of victory, triumph, purity may be indicative of peace.
    - iii) The conquest here would be a conquest of deception with peace to follow.
    - iv) As a parallel to this argument, MacArthur points to Hitler.
      - (1) He wrote *Mein Kampf* which was a complete outline of his idea of conquest and domination over 10 years before WWII began.
      - (2) Yet, even as he annexed countries and reoccupied the Rhineland in violation of the Versailles Treaty, he still claimed to be a man of peace.
      - (3) It was not until he invaded Poland in September of 1939 that the world woke up and realized what was happening.
      - (4) Too late – WWII ensued!
- 8) Regardless of the interpretation we might give, the rider is “bent on conquest” and, since he is given the victor’s crown the assumption must be made that the conquest is accomplished.
- 9) Another note on this from the LABC relates this seal to the first century reader:

The picture behind this for the first-century readers may have been the powerful Roman legions and their greatest foes — the Parthians who lived east of the Euphrates River, which became the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire. The Parthians had defeated the Roman army twice with their cavalry (the rider on horseback) and their archery (his bow). This had caused much fear of an invasion by the Parthians, so Rome eventually had made a treaty with them.

Most likely, the rider on the white horse represents sinful mankind's desire for conquest; when this occurs, many suffer.

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- 10) Finally, some scholars believe that the first seal also represents a period of peace on the earth – perhaps after the conquest.

11) As we will see, the description of the second rider lends some credence to this idea; he is given power to take peace from the earth.