

- (5.1) And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.
1. If you observe how chapter five begins, you will see no natural division of thought or subject matter between chapters four and five. These two chapters comprise one logical unit in John's Revelation. They set the stage, in heaven, for Christ's judgment to rain down upon a Hell-bound world that will not acknowledge Him as Lord and Savior until they are forced to do so. But when they are forced to do so, it will not result from any willing submission to Him as Lord and their destiny will remain unchanged. Their destiny will be the lake of fire.
 2. "And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book"
 - a. John brings our attention to a book. The book must be of great importance simply because it is in Almighty God's hand, specifically His right hand. The right hand of God is always the hand of favor, the hand of prominence. The book, which is a scroll, is written on both sides of the parchment or sheepskin.¹ "Jewish books of antiquity were usually sheepskin scrolls."²
 - b. A correct understanding of this book, this scroll, is critical to interpreting the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 9 gives us a clue: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." From what we know of the Mosaic Law, the book God holds in His right hand is called a book of redemption.
 - c. In the Old Testament, under the Law of Moses, provision was made for the redemption of servants, wives, and land.
 - i. When a man, during those times, was in deep debt or poverty to such an extent that he could not support himself, he could sell himself into servitude for enough money to pay off his debts and obligations. Unlike today, people in those days would instead be enslaved than not pay their debts. The master he then served would be responsible for feeding and clothing him in exchange for his labor. To end the servitude, the slave could be redeemed from bondage by a redeemer. That is the first redemption scenario.³
 - ii. When a woman was widowed and left childless by her husband, provision was made for her well-being and the preservation of her deceased husband's name and heritage. This would occur when the woman was redeemed by a man she would marry and bear children. However, the children born in her

¹ John Walvoord, *The Revelation Of Jesus Christ*, (Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1966), page 113.

² L. Sale-Harrison, *The Remarkable Revelation*, (New York: Sale-Harrison Publications, 1930), page 70.

³ Leviticus 25,47-55

second marriage would be considered her first husband's children, and they would inherit her first husband's inheritance.⁴

- iii. The third provision for redemption had to do with the land. The land given to Israel by God was not to be permanently sold to anyone but could, in effect, be "leased" for up to 49 years. During the year of jubilee, which came every 50 years, all land was to revert to its ancestral family owner. If the land was sold, or "leased" in this way, it could only be recovered before the year of jubilee if redeemed.⁵
 - iv. Note that in each case, redemption involved paying the price to recover that which needed redemption to return to its original owner or to its original state. In many cases, the initial property transfer involved legal paperwork that specified the monetary amount for which the property could be redeemed before the year of jubilee. In other words, nothing was left to chance.
- d. There were qualifications that the redeemer had to meet before he could redeem a servant, a childless widow, or a land. According to Leviticus chapter 25, the following stipulations had to be met:
 - i. The redeemer must *first* be a near kinsman. *Next*, the redeemer must be willing to redeem. *Finally*, the redeemer must be able to redeem.
 - ii. The marvelous love story of Ruth and Boaz in the book of Ruth calls to mind that Boaz redeemed both the wife and the land of Ruth's first husband, who had died, leaving her childless. Boaz was her first husband's near kinsman. Boaz was willing to redeem Ruth and the land. Finally, Boaz could redeem Ruth and the land, meaning he had the standing and resources to pay for it.⁶
 - iii. Remember that there had been a nearer kinsman who was unwilling to redeem Ruth and the land. Boaz is a picture of the Lord Jesus, both able and willing to redeem that which was sold into bondage.
 - e. Jeremiah 32.6-15. In this passage, Jeremiah's kinsman desires to sell his land, knowing that the Babylonians are about to invade:
 - ⁶ And Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
 - ⁷ Behold, Hanameel the son of Shallum thine uncle shall come unto thee, saying, Buy thee my field that *is* in Anathoth: for the right of redemption *is* thine to buy *it*.

⁴ Deuteronomy 25.5-10

⁵ Leviticus 25.25

⁶ Ruth 4

- ⁸ So Hanameel mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said unto me, Buy my field, I pray thee, that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin: for the right of inheritance *is* thine, and the redemption *is* thine; buy *it* for thyself. Then I knew that this *was* the word of the LORD.
- ⁹ And I bought the field of Hanameel my uncle's son, that *was* in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, *even* seventeen shekels of silver.
- ¹⁰ And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed *it*, and took witnesses, and weighed *him* the money in the balances.
- ¹¹ So I took the evidence of the purchase, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open:
- ¹² And I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Ne-riah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's *son*, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.
- ¹³ And I charged Baruch before them, saying,
- ¹⁴ Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days.
- ¹⁵ For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.

f. Alva J. McClain writes,

“This was not a book at all in the ordinary sense, but rather a *title-deed* written on both sides of a sheet of material, which was then rolled up and sealed, leaving the role so that one copy would be outside and visible but the other copy hidden inside. In case of tampering or dispute, the breaking of the seals would reveal the original copy and establish the lawful owner in his rights. Thus Biblically interpreted, the sealed document of Revelation 5 becomes a symbol of high importance; and the breaking of the seals by our Lord marks the first judicial assertion (in Revelation) of His legal rights, for the purpose of punishing and dispossessing the usurpers of His realm. In this sense, the breaking of the first seal becomes a strong harbinger of the impending kingdom.”⁷

g. To show the Jews that God will someday return His people to Palestine and to show them that the land will again be valuable to possess, Jeremiah redeemed the land. He was qualified to do this. He was Hanameel’s kinsman because he was willing to redeem it, and But notice! Jeremiah used a book, a scroll, to record the transaction. I believe John describes this type of scroll to us in Revelation 5.1.

⁷ Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness Of The Kingdom: An Inductive Study of the Kingdom of God*, (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1959), pages 472-473.

3. If you remember, chapter 5 is written from the perspective of Church Age Christians who have already been raptured and in heaven. This gives us a clue as to what specific kind of redemption is referred to by this scroll.
 - a. Can it refer to the redemption of a servant? No, because the servants are already in heaven (referring to Christians), and their redemption is completed with their glorified bodies.
 - b. Can it refer to the redemption of a wife? No. With the Church, as the bride of Christ, already in heaven, her redemption is complete.
 - c. What redemption is awaiting fulfillment, then? The land. It is the land that is to be redeemed during the Tribulation period.
4. As we journey through our study of Revelation, remember what happens as the scroll is opened. As the scroll is opened and the judgments are poured out upon the earth, God is retaking His whole creation from the bonds and defilement of sin. In Romans 8.18-23, we read what Paul says about that future time:
 - 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.
 - 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.
 - 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected *the same* in hope,
 - 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.
 - 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
 - 23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.
5. God holds that book in His right hand, a redemption book for the land! The breaking of those seven seals, which sealed that redemption book, will reveal the provisions written in it for the reclamation of God's creation.
6. But that is not all that this book is. We must never forget that so much of John's Revelation has a significance that can be traced back to the Old Testament, which seems to be the case here. Notice how much of what is found in this verse is remarkably similar to Ezekiel 2.9-10:
 - 9 And when I looked, behold, an hand *was* sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book *was* therein;
 - 10 And he spread it before me; and it *was* written within and without: and *there was* written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.

7. “sealed with seven seals”

- a. “Romans sealed their wills seven times-on the edge of each roll-to prevent unauthorized entry. Hebrew title deeds required a minimum of 3 witnesses and 3 separate seals, with more important transactions requiring more witnesses and seals.”⁸
- b. “As seven is a number of *perfection*, it may mean that the book was so sealed that the seals could neither be *counterfeited* nor *broken*; i.e., the matter of the book was so *obscure* and *enigmatical* and the work it enjoined and the facts it predicted so difficult and stupendous, that they could neither be known nor performed by human wisdom or power.”⁹

(5.2) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

1. From what we know of God’s plan and purpose as it is revealed in the Bible, God’s purpose is to open the book and redeem His earth from sin.
2. The Bible does not indicate who this angel is, but he is mighty and appears to have great authority. When powerful angels are mentioned in God’s Word, which two most readily come to your mind? Michael and Gabriel.
3. The question asked by this angel, proclaimed to the farthest reaches of the universe and God’s creation, by this angel who may or may not be either Michael or Gabriel, is “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?”
4. Who has the authority and power to open the book and to loose the seals? Let me paraphrase, “Who has the qualifications to be a redeemer?” Those qualifications are kinship, willingness, and ability.

(5.3) And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

1. The search for the qualified redeemer will be conducted throughout the universe. Heaven, earth, and under the earth will all be scanned and examined to find a man qualified to redeem the earth. But no man will be found who meets the qualifications.
2. The redeemer must be a man to be a kinsman to humanity, since the human race occupies the earth. But of all men, none can and are willing to redeem. Indeed, none will be found able to redeem the land.

⁸ See footnote for Revelation 5.1 from John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997), page 1999.

⁹ Adam Clarke, *Clarke’s Commentary, Vol VI*, (New York: Abingdon Press), page 990.

3. Not only will there be no one qualified to open the book by breaking the seals, neither will there be any qualified to look at what is written in the book after it is opened.

(5.4) And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

1. Why did John weep so at this point? Was he a weakling? No. Remember, according to traditional accounts, this old man has already been boiled in oil for Jesus' sake. He has already been beaten for Jesus' sake. He has already been persecuted for most of his adult life for Jesus' sake. No, he is no crybaby. Only something very important could move this man to tears.
2. John was moved to tears because he was impressed by man's complete inability to help himself in this enterprise, man's utter helplessness and hopelessness. Man cannot save himself. He is utterly depraved, and this redemption of the earth is just one small part of God's overall plan of salvation. The Greek word used here is the imperfect active indicative form of κλαίω, meaning to cry, weep aloud, or wail, establishing that John wept and cried aloud.¹⁰ Why would John sob in such a way? He understood, far more than we, how crucial it is for God to redeem back the Promised Land given to the nation of Israel.
3. Remember that John was a Jewish man. Being a Jewish believer, he appreciated the importance of the Promised Land in the plan and purpose of God. For God's plan of salvation to be fully worked out, God's covenant with Abraham must be fulfilled. And for the Abrahamic Covenant to be fulfilled, the land must be returned to the Jewish people to whom God promised it, and it must be returned purified from sin.
4. Realizing that a kinsman could not be found to fulfill this aspect of the Abrahamic Covenant, John had a typical human response to what appeared to be a hopeless situation. He broke down and cried. There was no man to open the book, to read the book, or even to look upon the book.
5. Lehman Strauss:

“But how can there be weeping in Heaven? Whatever the correct answer is to this question, it certainly is not revealed fully in the Scriptures. John wept because no man was found worthy to open the scroll, and I only assume that the scroll, unlifted and unopened, brought forth from God's servant tears of concern and compassion over an inheritance unredeemed. Little wonder he gave way to grief, and tears flooded his eyes! Present-day Christianity seems to show little concern over the very thing which caused John to weep. John knew that the finding of a redeemer and the opening of the scroll was necessary before many prophecies of the Old

¹⁰ Rogers, Jr., Cleon L. and Rogers III, Cleon L., *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key To The Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: ZondervanPublishingHouse, 1998), page 625.

Testament could be fulfilled. There remained to be fulfilled the retribution of the wicked, the restoration of Israel to Palestine, and the reign of Christ over all the earth. These and other prophecies could not be fulfilled as long as the scroll remained sealed.

There was a time in the life and ministry of our Lord when He wept. John wept, and so he might. Jeremiah wept over the fallen city of Jerusalem. When did you and I weep over a world in spiritual darkness, from which men are passing one by one into an eternal eclipse, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth? John wept audibly, not because of any weakness, but because of deep concern. Someone has said, ‘Without tears the Revelation was not written; neither without tears can it be understood.’”¹¹

(5.5) And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

1. The verb κλαίω, found here in the present active imperative form, is used with μή to stop an action in progress.¹² A victory has been won! There is no longer a need to mourn. The Lord Jesus has “prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.”
2. Who can redeem the land? “Evidently any one of the elders could have answered. They had spiritual illumination.”¹³ Who does this elder point to? The Lord Jesus Christ. But is the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to redeem the land?
 - a. This “takes our minds back to the words of Jacob’s prophecy given on his death-bed.”¹⁴ “The lion was an emblem of strength, majesty, courage, and menace as well as symbolic of intellectual excellence.”¹⁵ That He is “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” reminds us that He is a man. But more than that, He is Jewish, which more than qualifies Him as a kinsman. So, He is qualified in that respect.
 - b. “Reference to Christ as the Root of David stems from the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1: ‘And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out his roots’ (cf. Isa. 11:10).”¹⁶ Being “the Root of David” lets us know that He is the Son of God. Being the Son of God, He has infinite power at His disposal. Therefore, He can redeem. That is the second qualification met.
 - c. He “hath prevailed to open the book.” The word “prevailed” is an aorist tense verb, from the Greek νικάω, which refers to being victorious or overcoming obstacles.¹⁷ This lets us know that the elder who speaks to comfort John refers to the past, to Christ’s death on the cross, when he refers to Christ having

¹¹ Lehman Strauss, *The Book Of The Revelation*, (Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1963), pages 143-144.

¹² Rogers and Rogers, page 625.

¹³ J. Vernon McGee, *Reveling Through Revelation, Part I*, (Pasadena, CA: Thru The Bible Books, 1979), page 46.

¹⁴ L. Sale-Harrison, page 71.

¹⁵ Rienecker & Rogers, page 824.

¹⁶ Walvoord, page 114.

¹⁷ Ibid.

prevailed to open the book. Thus, Jesus was more than willing to pay the redemption price. He did spend the redemption price. He paid with His Own blood, on the cross of Calvary.

3. What does this suggest? Jesus can loose not one but all seven seals that seal the redemption scroll. All that now awaits John is the actual breaking of the seven seals.

(5.6) And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

1. We have read that the setting is heaven. We know of the great throne, that four and twenty elders on their thrones surround it, and that there are four angelic beings in the midst of it all. We also know that Almighty God is sitting on the throne at the center of it all.
2. John then informs us that standing before the throne of God is the Lamb. There is no indication that He has always been there but that He just appeared moments before. But notice what John says: “a Lamb as it had been slain.” “He still bears the death wounds in His body.”¹⁸
3. What about His description? Let me mention a rule of interpretation. If the literal sense makes common sense, seek no other sense. But since the literal sense here is ridiculous, we understand that John uses symbolic terminology to communicate certain truths. Also, mind this: Biblical symbolism always has as its intent the communication of truth, not the concealing of truth. With these things in mind, what do we learn from John’s descriptions of the Lamb?
4. In the Old Testament, horns were used by the prophets in their prophetic writings to symbolize governmental authority and power. The seven spirits mentioned here, from a comparison of Isaiah 11.2, refer to the Holy Spirit of God. This would indicate that taken together, the horns, eyes, and spirits convey the thought that at the Lamb’s disposal is infinite power and infinite knowledge ... by the Holy Spirit, Who was sent into the world by the Lord Jesus Christ.
5. The question is, “Who is the Lamb? Who is the Lion referred to in verse 5?” If the Lamb refers to the Lord Jesus Christ during the First Advent, His first coming, what does the Lion refer to? Christ came in peace as the sacrifice for men’s sins the first time He came to earth. How do you think He will return if the Lion symbol holds up? And it will hold up.

(5.7) And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ took the book I identified as the book of redemption from His Father’s right hand. A little aside before we address the thrust of this verse. This verse

¹⁸ Strauss, page 145.

shows the Lord Jesus Christ coming and taking the book out of the right hand of Almighty God, which is to say, the Father. This shows the distinctiveness of the first and second Persons of the triune Godhead.

- a. You might wonder what is so important about this observation. The distinctiveness of the first and second Persons of the Trinity is vital in consideration of the rise in these last days of the error of modalism.
 - b. “Also called Sabellianism, the trinitarian heresy that does not view Father, Son and Spirit as three particular “persons in relation” but merely as three modes or manifestations of the one divine person of God. Thus God comes in salvation history as Father to create and give the law, as Son to redeem and as Spirit to impart grace.”¹⁹
2. If my portrayal of this scroll is correct, and if the last phase of God’s overall plan is about to begin in this portion of Scripture, then it would be reasonable to expect a great response as the Lord Jesus Christ steps forward to take the scroll from His Father, would it not?
- (5.8) And when he had taken the book, the four beasts *and* four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.
1. Remember my assertion. I suggested that if the scroll is a redemption book, and if it is significant for the redemption of the land, as our examination of the Old Testament suggested it might be, then we would see some reaction when Christ took the book.
 2. Is that not precisely what happens? The four angelic beings and the two dozen elders seated on the thrones fall down before the Lamb, which is “The usual posture of profound worship.”²⁰ Before we move on, notice what each of those who fell before the Lord had in their possession. They had harps, and they had golden vials with incense in them.
 3. We know what the vials and incense represent. John tells us. They represent the prayers of the saints. “The symbolism of bowls of incense representing the prayers of the saints is reflected in Psalm 141:2 where David cried to the Lord, ‘Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.’”²¹
 4. What could the harp be for? Perhaps an instrument used to accompany the worship and praise of God? These elders are either praising or praying all the time. Praising and worshipping God is something believers had better get used to. Do you not agree? We will spend our eternity engaged in such activities.

¹⁹ Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki & Cherith Fee Nordling, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1999), page 79.

²⁰ Albert Barnes, *Albert Barnes’ NT Commentary*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

²¹ Walvoord, page 117.

5. Matthew Henry observes, “(1.) The object of their worship--*the Lamb*, the Lord Jesus Christ; it is the declared will of God that all men *should honour the Son as they honour the Father*; for he has the same nature. (2.) Their posture: *They fell down before him*, gave him not an inferior sort of worship, but the most profound adoration. (3.) The instruments used in their adorations--*harps and vials*; the harps were the instruments of praise, the vials were full of odours or incense, which signify *the prayers of the saints*: prayer and praise should always go together.”²²

(5.9-10) And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

1. “And they sung a new song”

- a. We can tell, by the words of their new song, that only the elders are singing. How can we be sure of this? We can be sure of this because the angels would never rejoice in their redemption, kingship, or priesthood since none apply to them.
- b. Angels are not redeemed or redeemable. Holy angels do not need redemption, and fallen angels will not be redeemed. But the elders, who are the only ones who can sing this new song, declare several things in their song.

2. “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof”

- a. They acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is worthy to take the book and open the seals. Though their recognition of Christ’s rights and privileges to be our kinsman-redeemer is not necessary for Him to accomplish His task, such honor is due Him. It is good to give honor to whom honor is due.
- b. Honor is significant in God’s scheme of things, so Christians should be well-versed in appreciating what honor is and who is worthy to receive honor. Revelation 4.11 is an excellent place to start: “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” Proverbs 15.33 and 18.12 are important: “before honour *is* humility.”
- c. Our Lord Jesus Christ humbled Himself, did He not? He is, therefore, worthy of our honor. As well, in our midst, according to God’s Word, some are worthy of honor. However, in heaven, all attention is focused on the Lamb.

3. “for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation”

²² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary On The Whole Bible*, (Bronson, MI: Online Publishing, Inc., 2002), bible@mail.com

- a. This portion of the verse gives us their reason for recognizing His worthiness. He was slain, and He redeemed them by His blood. The shedding of His precious blood that provides the ground for the redemption of sins.
 - b. It is not a popular reality to emphasize these days among some evangelicals, but it seems to be important to God, the 24 elders, and the One Who shed His blood.
 - c. If you have doubts about the identity of the elders, pay attention to the fact that they were redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. Can this be referring to the nation of Israel? No. This must, therefore, refer to Church Age believers. Why so? Israel is a single nation comprised of the physical descendants of a single man, Jacob, the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham. Churches, however, comprise those from every kindred, tribe, and tongue.
5. “And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”
- a. Having made His saints both kings and priests, the Lord Jesus will allow us to rule and reign on the earth. The word “on,” translating the Greek preposition ἐπί, removes all doubt about where the Christians of this age will rule during the millennium. Ἐπί means upon.²³ Therefore, we will reign **on** this earth.
 - b. We will rule **on** the earth, at the right-hand side of our Savior, the King of kings. However, this arrangement would not preclude us from simultaneously ruling elsewhere in the universe.
 - c. But though we **will** rule as kings, we **already are** priests. What are the functions of priests? Have you ever cataloged your duties as a priest of God? Perhaps we should now note our priestly responsibilities as an indication of what they likely will be in the future.
 - i. First Peter 2.5: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Christians offer up spiritual sacrifices to God that Jesus Christ made acceptable.
 - ii. First Peter 2.9: “But ye **are** a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” Christians offer up praises to God.
 - iii. Hebrews 13.15: “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of **our** lips giving thanks to his name.”

²³ Bruce M. Metzger, *Lexical Aids For Students Of New Testament Greek*, (Princeton, NJ: Bruce M. Metzger, 1989), page 80.

This verse shows our praises to be part of our spiritual sacrifices, and that praise includes giving thanks.

- iv. Hebrews 13.16: “But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” This next verse shows that sharing what God has given to you with the cause of Christ, which is what “communicate” means, is also a priestly sacrifice that pleases God.²⁴
- v. Philippians 4.18: “But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.” Here the offerings the Philippians sent to Paul, the money Epaphroditus brought with him, is shown to be an acceptable sacrifice from Christians.
- vi. Romans 12.1: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service.*” As priests of God, Christians also give their own bodies as living sacrifices. Thus, you should present your body a living sacrifice, rather than present some dead carcass to burn on an altar.

- (5.11-12) ¹¹ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;
- ¹² Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

1. “And I beheld, and I heard.” This is “John’s constant reminder that he is a spectator to this scene in heaven.”²⁵
2. What did John behold? He both heard and saw the angelic hosts joining in on the worship. How many would you say there are, judging from the numbers that John throws at us? At the very least, John refers to hundreds of millions, if not hundreds of billions of angels.
3. What do the angels say? They agree with the elders. They, too, believe that the Lamb is worthy. But not being able to rejoice in their redemption; since sinless beings do not need redemption by His blood, they ascribe power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing to Him.
4. Consider these one at a time: “*Power.*” Jesus said, ‘All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth’ (Matthew 28:18). He demonstrated His power in creation (Colossians 1:16); in maintaining an orderly universe (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3); over demons (Mark 5:1-20); over disease (Mark 5:25-29), and over death (Mark 5:35-43). In Heaven all men and angels yield to His authority. Are we willing to do so now? He is worthy!

²⁴ Rienecker & Rogers, page 719.

²⁵ McGee, page 48.

‘Riches.’ The Bible says, ‘He was rich’ (2 Corinthians 8:9). And why shouldn’t He be, inasmuch as He created all things? ‘The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts’ (Haggai 2:8). Many a man has learned that he possesses only what he has received, and that ‘the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away’ (Job 1:21). ‘We brought nothing into this world’ (1 Timothy 6:7). It is ‘the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy’ (1 Timothy 6:17). In Heaven all men and angels lay their resources at His feet. Are we willing to do so now? He is worthy!

‘Wisdom.’ As I write, word has just been received that the United States has successfully sent her second astronaut into orbit and returned him to earth safely. We boast knowledge and wisdom as we make progress in scientific research, and yet man but discovers what Christ has Himself created. We Christians know that Christ is made unto us wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:30). Hardly a day goes by without our having to turn to Him for wisdom, and we know that He always gives it to us liberally (James 1:5). In Heaven all wisdom is attributed to Him. Have we yielded our minds to Him now? He is worthy!

‘Strength.’ When He comes to earth the second time it will be as ‘the King of glory, the LORD strong and mighty’ (Psalm 24:8). Satan is strong but Christ is able to bind him (Matthew 12:29) and He will bind him (Revelation 20:2). None but Christ can break the chains of the devil (Luke 8:26-36). He is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. In Heaven all men and angels acknowledge Him as the source of their strength. Do we? Have we laid our physical resources at His feet? He is worthy!

‘Honour.’ Christ is honored in Heaven but dishonored on earth. In Heaven He is praised while on earth He is blasphemed. He is crowned with honor (Psalm 8:5 cf. Hebrews 2:7, 9) and clothed with honor (Psalm 104:1). If we are going to give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7) we must turn to Christ and acknowledge Him. In Heaven all men and angels honor Him. Have we? He is worthy! He says, ‘Them that honour Me I will honour’ (1 Samuel 2:30).

‘Glory.’ We are so self-opinionated that the glory which is due to our Lord we take to ourselves. Paul could say, ‘Not I, but Christ’ (Galatians 2:20). When our Lord was here on earth the divine glory was exhibited both in His character and in His acts (John 1:14; 2:11; 11:4, 40; 17:5, 24). In Heaven all men and angels think more highly of Him than they do of them selves or of each other. Do we ascribe all glory to the Lamb as we will do in Immanuel’s land? He is worthy!

‘Blessing.’ To bless means to make happy. Is He happy with every area of our lives? The Psalmist called upon the whole man to make Him happy when he said, ‘Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits’ (Psalm 103:1-2). Have you ever spent one whole day just concentrating on making the Lord Jesus happy? In Heaven men and angels do this. And the day is coming when ‘Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever' (Revelation 5:13)."²⁶

5. First, it was the elders. Then the angelic host. Now look who joins in.

(5.13) And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

1. I think it is safe to say that this refers to every living being in the entire universe, except for sinful beings. Unserved men and fallen angels are probably not joining this particular praise chorus.
2. Can you imagine this paean of praise? They are praising both the Father and the Son. But why not the Holy Spirit? Because His ministry is to direct us to the Father through the Son, not to Himself.

(5.14) And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

1. They stopped. Why did they stop? They stopped praising the Lord's intentions of opening the book because He is now getting ready to open it and break the seals.
2. The angels wind things down with a good hearty "Amen." Then the elders conclude by falling before the Lord Jesus Christ once more and worshipping Him.

- Note:**
1. Let me set the scene for you as we prepare to study the sixth chapter of John's Revelation.
 2. John is in heaven. Chronologically, we are in a period that follows the Rapture of the Church Age saints. The glorified Jesus Christ has just taken the seven-sealed book of redemption from His Father's right hand. And it is that scroll, that book, which contains the secrets of the future of the human race on this planet earth.
 3. As we move into chapter 6, the Lord Jesus Christ, referred to as the Lamb by John, having waited until the chorus of heavenly worship and praise ends, opens the first of the seals.

²⁶ Strauss, pages 150-152.