Questions on Revelation chapter 5.8-14

Chapter 4-5 picture the heavenly throne room. It is like we are allowed to pull back the curtain and see all the spiritual things as they really are. G.B Caird calls it the control room of the supreme headquarters.

There are 7 rings to this control room.

In the center is God who sits on the throne. We also learned that the Lamb approached the throne and took the scroll.

Ring 1: The white sparkling diamond (4:2)

Ring 2: The sardius. (4:3)

Ring 3: The emerald rainbow. (4:3)

Ring 4: The four living ones. (4:6)

Ring 5: The twenty-four thrones and elders. (4:4)

Ring 6: The “many angels”. (5:11)

Ring 7: All other creatures in the universe. (5:13)

We’ll be looking at the last two rings.

v.8-14 are the response to the Lamb in v.5-7 who answered the problem in v.1-4. Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? How will God’s will be accomplished? How can man be redeemed? How can good triumph over evil? How can we have hope? The answer to all these questions is the same. The message of redemption is woven throughout Revelation and is the constant reminder of the path to victory. Jesus Christ is the Lamb who was slain. He then ascended to reign.

v.8-14 we have three doxologies (words of glory) from 3 different groups.

The Lamb is introduced as the redeemer, and he sets the scene for the opening of the 7 seals.

15. What did the living creatures and the four and twenty elders do when the Lamb took the book? Verse 8.

Revelation 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

The 24 elders - organized religion

The 4 creatures - most likely heavenly angels of a high order who help accomplish God’s will throughout the earth. They could be Cheribum. Ezekiel 10:20 uses the term “living creature” and connects it with Cheribum.

**Both groups fell down before Jesus to worship him.**

16. We don’t have to wonder what the “golden vials full of odors” represent, but what do you think the harps represent? Verse 8.

Each of the elders had a harp. This was not clear to me by simply reading the NKJV verse. Hendriksen, G.K. Beale, Summers, Vincent’s Word Studies and most commentaries all agree that only the 24 elders have the harps and bowls of incense.

This would be a great example of the benefits of knowing a little greek. Beale is one commentator I found that explains why the harps and bowls are connected to the 24 elders, not the 4 beasts. He uses the Greek word grammatical details to get there. He connects “having”, with “the 24 elders”, not the 4 living creatures.

I don’t know enough to really argue with this, but I don’t think their conclusions are destructive to the context. I would say that this conclusion helps the context. It makes sense that the Elders possess the harps and bowls of incense. They are performing their priestly duties.

The harps should be taken as literally as the bowls of intense and the creatures/elders themselves. It is in the middle of obvious symbolic language. John is describing the heavenly realm with relatable language. **The harps represent praise** **(perhaps in song)** and the incense represent prayers. What a beautiful description. David played the harp and was pleasing to the King. Praise to God is pleasing to our greater and perfect King.

The prayers of saints are offered to God as incense. The context of the book is the trials the church was facing and would face. These prayers were not just offering praise. They included request that God carry out his divine judgment and plan. This is a similar sentiment later in the book.

Revelation 6:9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

We often describe prayer as a sweet smelling savor.

Psalm 141:2 Let my prayer be set before You as incense,  
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

God is pleased with the prayers of the saints and accepts them as incense.

17. Why do you think the song is described as a “new song”? Verse 9.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying:“You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

**It is described as a new song because Jesus changed everything.** Satan “Fell from heaven” because of Jesus’ accomplishments. Luke 10.18; Satan was dealt the death blow to the head. Gen. 3.15; Satan was no longer able to accuse the people of God. Rev. 12.10… all of these descriptions show the change that occurred when Jesus died. This warranted the “New Song”. He brought forth a new era and was uniquely qualified for the task of opening the seals: Redemption and Judgment.

Roberton’s word pictures: new: a fresh song for new mercies (Isa. 42:10; Psa. 33:3; 40:3, etc.), here in praise of redemption to Christ (14:3) like the new name (2:17; 3:12), the new Jerusalem (3:12; 21:2), the new heaven and the new earth (21:1), not the old song of creation (4:8, 11) to God.

I want to compare a couple of verses here.

Revelation 5:5 But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and [b]to loose its seven seals.”

The Lion PREVAILED BECAUSE of his death! Because of his death, he redeemed and made all saints a Kingdom and priests (10) I’ve mentioned this before, but I think it’s an important point to keep in mind. Victory through death was not expected! It could not be orchestrated through man’s wisdom, but it is precisely the way God chose to win. This is a great theme found in Revelation.

18. Why is the Lamb “worthy,” according to the song? Verses 9-10.

Revelation 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,  
And to open its seals;  
For You were slain,  
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood  
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

10 And have made [a]us kings[b] and priests to our God;  
And [c]we shall reign on the earth.”

**He was slain.**

**He redeemed US by his blood.**

**He made us a Kings and Priests.** Only he could accomplish this task, as we have mentioned before.

19. How are the redeemed made “a kingdom and priests” (American Standard Version)? Verses 9-10.

Rev. 5:10 ASV: and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth.

There is both a sense of ruling and priesthood. Each idea is the fulfillment of prophesy. We can look to Daniel 7

Daniel 7:22 until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Daniel 7:27 Then the kingdom and dominion,  
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,  
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.  
His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,  
And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.’

These verses give us a sense of the universal reign given to the saints.

The idea of a Kingdom of priest is even more clear in Exodus.

Exodus 19:6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

As you can probably tell, this was just before Moses received the Law from God. God chose Israel to be a holy nation. They were set apart when they crossed the red sea. They were saved from the bondage of sin. They were saved from death when they sacrificed the lamb and applied the blood upon their door posts.

Rev. 1.5-6 also mentions this idea of the Kingdom of Priests.

Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who [a]loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,

6 and has made us [b]kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The salvation of Israel is a type of the saint’s salvation from the bondage of Sin. The Lamb was sacrificed. When the sinner applies the blood, he is saved from the bondage of sin. So, when we combine all these reference verses together, we get the idea of a universal Kingdom of Priests. This is realized in the church.

1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

**The saints are made a kingdom and priests through the blood of the Lamb.**

That concludes Song number 1. (READ together from Pew BIBLE)

20. Do you think John gives an exact number of angels, or does he suggest an innumerable quantity? Verse 11. (See Hebrews 12:22)

Revelation 5:11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

It is generally said that the phrase ten thousand times ten thousand is taken from Daniel 7.10

It think Johnny’s comparison is even clearer.

Hebrews 12:22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels,

The first two mentions of Thousand in Rev. 5.11 “Ten Thousand times ten thousand” is translated as innumerable in Hebrews 12.22

μυριάς   myrias  - a myriad, ten thousand, Acts 19:19; indefinitely, a vast multitude,

Like many of the numbers in revelation, we should be more concerned with what they mean than their numerical value. The “ten thousand times ten thousands” also is a large number that would be difficult or nearly impossible to keep track of. **This is an innumerable host of angels.**

Now we get to Song 2.

21. How many qualities do the angels ascribe to the Lamb and what does that number suggest? Verse 12.

Revelation 5:12 saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain  
To receive power and riches and wisdom,  
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!”

I was impressed with this question/comment. Before this, I paid attention to numbers when they were stated in the book. Here we have no number stated, but it is evident through counting. These are easy attributes to understand, and yet they are such wonderful gifts. Searching for the worthy receiver of these gifts of praise is just as difficult as finding the one worthy to open the seals. Only Jesus the Lion/Lamb is worthy.

**7 qualities. This describes perfection!**

Ray Summers - “7 represents completeness through union of earth and heaven.”

You could be clever and describe the lamb with more qualitative words. You can lift up more offerings of praise. John could have continued on and on, but he picked 7 to show us that the Lamb possesses ALL the perfect and wonderful qualities found in heaven and on earth.

(READ song 2)

22. To whom is the universal acclamation and praise of the whole creation directed? Verse 13.

Song 3.

Revelation 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, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honor and glory and power  
Be to Him who sits on the throne,  
And to the Lamb, forever and [a]ever!”

Similar language is found in verse 12.

(12) power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!”

(13) Blessing, Honor, Glory, and power

When every creature presents praise, we reach the climax of Chapter 4 and 5.

Chapter 4:God and Creation

Chapter 5:the Lamb and redemption

**The praise is to both God and the Lamb.**

The idea of every creature in all locations seems to point to UNIVERSAL praise. This idea is most likely picturing the end.

This universal praise not only comes from the saints, but from the enemies of Christ.

Philippians 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Romans 14:11 For it is written:

“As I live, says the Lord,  
Every knee shall bow to Me,  
And every tongue shall confess to God.”

23. What is the only word to be added to what has been said? Verse 14.

Revelation 5:14 New King James Version (NKJV)

14 Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the [a]twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped [b]Him who lives forever and ever.

**Amen**

Robertsons Word Pictures: “The four living creatures give their approval to the doxology…”

We must also note that Revelation 5 is one of the strongest attests to the Deity of Jesus Christ. He is universally worshipped and there is no question or objection. He is not some created angel. If he was, he could not accept worship.

Revelation 19:10

Revelation 22:8 Now I, John, [a]saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.9 Then he said to me, “See that you do not do that. [b]For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

John sees the end. Whether it is in anticipation of the end, or scene at the end of time we may debate. This one thing is sure. The victory was already won. This is the first worship scene that praises God for his triumph in Revelation. As we get to the other similar scenes, realize the surety of this praise. The winning team has already been declared. It is so incredibly certain that there is no need to fear the enemy. Though enemies may seem overwhelming and dreadful to us as we look to them through our physical eyes. If we open the curtain to the throne room, we see God in control and ruling through the lamb slain. The powerful 4 creatures, 24 elders, countless hosts in heaven, and all created beings offer praise and worship to him who sits on the throne and to the lamb!

Ray Summers says to: Take heart. God is powerful and sits on the thrown. God has redeemed Christians. No force can ever take that away.

John has told us about the end and the winning side. We must all ask ourselves this: how could we join ourselves with the wrong team? If we submit to the devil and do not repent, our destiny will be with the wicked. We will lose along with the enemy. This is a sure reality.

24. How would you name the three songs directed to the Lamb?

Revelation 4:9-11: **Song of Redemption**

Revelation 5:8-10: **The Lamb’s perfection**

Revelation 5:11-14: **God and the Lamb: the climax of praise**