

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 348 – December 14th – Revelation 5:1-14

Works frequently referenced in these notes on the book of Revelation

Morris, Leon	<i>The Revelation of St John</i> (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1969
Mounce, Robert H	<i>The Book of Revelation</i> (New International Commentary on the New Testament), Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1977
Peterson, Eugene H	<i>Reversed Thunder</i> , San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1991
Witherington, Ben	<i>Revelation</i> (New Cambridge Bible Commentary), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003

Verse 1

Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγῖσιν ἑπτὰ.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω see
δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξιά right hand
καθημαι see 4:9
βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll
γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γραφω write
ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside
ὀπισθεν adv. behind, on the back

The reading ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν is strongly supported, but the reading given above best explains the several variants.

κατασφραγίζω seal
σφραγίς, ἰδος f seal, mark
ἑπτα seven

"Filled to overflowing and sealed with seven seals to insure [sic] the secrecy of its decrees, it contains the full account of what God in his sovereign will has determined as the destiny of the world." Mounce. Cf. Ps 139:16. In particular, it contains God's plan for the establishment of his kingdom – the purpose of history.

Witherington thinks that there is an allusion to Ezek 2:9,10 and that the scroll is a scroll of judgments.

Verse 2

καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Τίς ἄξιός ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λῦσαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ;

ἰσχυρός, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
κηρυσσω preach, proclaim
μεγας, μεγαλη, μεγα large, great
ἄξιός, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
ἀνοιγω open
λυω loose, release

Who is capable of effecting the purposes of God – able to establish his kingdom?

Verse 3

καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
οὐρανός, ου m heaven
γῆ, γῆς f earth, land
ὑποκάτω prep with gen under, beneath

"The tripartite division of the universe (heaven, earth, under the earth) is also found in Philippians 2:10 – incidentally in a scene of universal adoration of Christ – and probably stems from the second commandment which forbids making any likeness of that which is in 'heaven above, or ... in the earth beneath, or ... in the waters under the earth' (Ex 20:4). As used here it stresses the universality of the proclamation rather than some particular cosmology." Mounce.

οὔτε not, nor, neither
βλεπω see, look, be able to see

I.e. look into it, read its contents.

Verse 4

καὶ ἐγὼ ἔκλαιον πολὺ ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιός εὐρέθη ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

Many MSS read καὶ ἐγώ. A majority of the UBS committee considered that ἐγώ was added by copyists to identify the subject of the otherwise ambiguous ἔκλαιον.

κλαίω weep, cry
πολυ much, greatly
εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρίσκω
find

It would mean that the promise of 4:1 will remain unfulfilled.

Verse 5

καὶ εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι· Μὴ κλαῖε· ἰδοὺ ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ῥίζα Δαυὶδ, ἀνοίξει τὸ βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

Preston and Hanson consider this, together with the next verse, among the most profound in the entire book in that "they relate Jewish Messianic hopes to the distinctively Christian good news of the advent of the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth."

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
πρεσβυτερος, α, ον see 4:10
νικαω conquer, overcome, win the verdict
λεων, οντος m lion
φυλη, ης f tribe

Cf. Gen 49:9-10.

ρίζα, ης f root, source

Cf. Is 11:1.

"John is to cease weeping, for Christ has conquered once and for all. Paradoxically, this decisive victory over Satan and death was accomplished on the cross. He conquered by an act of total self-sacrifice. The result is that he alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny both to reveal and to carry out the final dissolution of all forces set in opposition to the eternal kingdom of God." Mounce.

Verse 6

Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἄρνιον ἐστηκὸς ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, ἔχων κέρατα ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ, οἳ εἰσιν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν.

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle

τεσσαρες see 5:4

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον see 5:10

ἄρνιον, ου n lamb, sheep

Cf. John 1:29. This title is used of Jesus 28 times in Revelation. Comparing vv 5 & 6, Keener comments, "Jesus conquered not by force but by death, not by violence but by martyrdom. The Lion is a Lamb!"

ἐστηκὸς Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc s
ἵστημι stand

ἐσφαγμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s σφαζω slaughter, put to death

The perfect tenses emphasise the lasting benefits of Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection.

Witherington writes, "A Boesak makes the additional good point that the slain lamb is standing, whereas we might have expected it to be a limp corpse lying on an altar. The enemy may have thought they conquered it, but they did not. It overcame death though bears scars. This is at the heart of John's message of hope to his congregations facing and no doubt fearing persecution and even execution."

κερας, ατος n horn

ἑπτα seven

ἀπεσταλμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
ἀποστελλω send, send out

"The seven horns of the Lamb symbolise his irresistible might. His seven eyes speak of that completeness of vision which leads to perfect knowledge." Mounce.

Verse 7

καὶ ἦλθεν καὶ εἴληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου.

εἴληφεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s λαμβανω

δεξια see v.1

καθημαι sit, sit down

Verse 8

καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβεν τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἄρνιου, ἔχοντες ἕκαστος κιθάραν καὶ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, αἱ εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων·

ὅτε conj when

ἔλαβεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s λαμβανω

βιβλιον, ου n see v.1

εικοσι see 4:10

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall,
fall down

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

ἄρνιον, ου n see v.6

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every

Mounce suggests that this refers not to the four living creatures but only to the 24 elders. They are representative of the entire people of God.

κιθαρα, ας f harp

φιαλη, ης f bowl

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

γεμω be full

θυμιαμα, ατος n incense

προσευχη, ης f prayer

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

Cf. Ps 141:2.

Verse 9

καὶ ἄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν λέγοντες· Ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους,

"In chapter 4 the twenty-four elders praised the worthiness of God for his work in creation (vs.11). In chapter 5 they direct their praise to the Lamb for his work of redemption."

Mounce. Jesus is therefore worshipped in the same way as God (cf. 1:17-18 etc.) while other heavenly beings may not be worshipped (cf. 19:10; 22:8-9).

ᾄδω sing

ᾠδῆ, ἡς f song, song of praise

καινός, ἡ, ον new

Cf. Ps 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; Is 42:10. "Every new act of mercy calls forth a new song of gratitude and praise... The song of the Lamb is a new song because the covenant established through his death is a new covenant. It is not simply new in point of time, but more important, it is new and distinctive in quality." Mounce.

ἄξιός, α, ον see v.2

The Lamb is worthy for a threefold reason: he was slain; he purchased a people for God; he made them a kingdom and priests.

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω

ἀνοιγῶ see v.2

σφραγίς, ἰδος f see v.1

ἐσφάγης Verb, aor pass indic, 2 s σφαζῶ
see v.6

ἀγοραζῶ buy, redeem

Cf. Mk 10:45; 1 Cor 6:20.

αἷμα, ατος f blood

φυλῆ, ἡς f see v.5

γλώσσα, ἡς f tongue, language

λαός, ου m people, a people

ἔθνος, ους n nation

"It is fruitless to attempt a distinction between these terms as ethnic, linguistic, political, etc. The Seer is stressing the universal nature of the church and for this purpose piles up phrases for their rhetorical value. In contrast with the exclusivism of Judaism which prided itself in having been chosen out from among the nations, the church was genuinely ecumenical, recognising no national, political, cultural, or racial boundaries." Mounce.

Verse 10

καὶ ἐποίησας αὐτοῦς τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλείαν καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύουσιν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

Cf. 1:6; Ex 19:6. "Both of these terms are active in meaning: as a *kingdom* 'they shall reign,' and as *priests* they serve. By his death Jesus established his church 'a Kingdom of Priests in the service of our God' (Twentieth Century New Testament)." Mounce.

Beasley-Murray stresses the Exodus imagery: Jesus is the passover Lamb and has led to the creation of a new people of God.

βασιλευω rule, reign

The future tense has slightly better attestation than the present. "The promise is that the church is to share in the eschatological reign of Christ and all that it will involve (2:26-27; 20:4; 22:5)." Mounce.

Verse 11

Καὶ εἶδον, καὶ ἤκουσα φωνὴν ἀγγέλων πολλῶν κύκλω τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν ζώων καὶ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, καὶ ἦν ὁ ἀριθμὸς αὐτῶν μυριάδες μυριάδων καὶ χιλιάδες χιλιάδων,

The adoration of the Lamb moves out in ever widening circles.

πολύς, πολλή, πολυ gen πολλοῦ, ἡς, ου i)

much, many

κύκλω see 4:6

ἀριθμὸς, ου m number, total

μυριάς, αδος f group of ten thousand, countless thousands

χιλιάς, αδος f (group of) a thousand;

χιλιοί, αι, α thousand

I.e. so numerous as to be beyond human calculation. Cf. Dan 7:10.

Verse 12

λέγοντες φωνῇ μεγάλῃ· Ἄξιόν ἐστιν τὸ ἄρνιον τὸ ἐσφαγμένον λαβεῖν τὴν δύναμιν καὶ πλοῦτον καὶ σοφίαν καὶ ἰσχὺν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ δόξαν καὶ εὐλογίαν.

ἄρνιον, ου n see 5:6

ἐσφαγμένον see 5:6

Mounce follows Beckwith in saying "Power, riches, wisdom and might are not benefits which the Lamb is about to receive but qualities which he possesses and for which he is worthy to be praised." Cf. 1 Cor 1:24; 2 Cor 8:9; Eph 3:8; Lk 11:20; Phil 2:11; Jn 1:14; Rom 15:29.

πλοῦτος, ου m & n riches, wealth

σοφία, ας f wisdom

ἰσχυς, υος f strength

τιμῆ, ἡς f see 4:9

δόξα, ἡς f see 4:9

εὐλογία, ας f blessing, praise

Of this last, Barclay says it is "the one gift that we who have nothing can give Him who possesses all."

Verse 13

καὶ πᾶν κτίσμα ὃ ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
καὶ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης, καὶ
τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα, ἤκουσα λέγοντας· Τῷ
καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ ἡ
εὐλογία καὶ ἡ τιμὴ καὶ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος
εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.

κτίσμα, τος n what is created, creature

ὑποκατω see v.3

θαλασσα, ης f sea

"No living creature fails to join in the great and final hymn of praise (cf. Phil 2:9-11)."

Mounce.

καθημαι see 4:9

"The praise of the entire created order is addressed to the One who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb. Throughout the Apocalypse the two are regularly joined. In 22:1 the water flows "from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (cf. 6:16; 17:10)." Mounce.

εὐλογία, ας f see v.12

κρατος, ους n might, power, dominion

αἰωνων see 4:9

Verse 14

καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα ἔλεγον· Ἀμήν. καὶ οἱ
πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν καὶ προσεκύνησαν.

ἔπεσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall,
fall down

προσκυνω worship

The cry of 'Amen' from the angelic beings and falling down in worship of the elders may have been repeated after each of the seven attributes in v.12 is announced. Witherington, commenting on this worship of the Lamb writes, "The implication is clear that the Lamb is divine."