

E.M. Zerr Commentary On Revelation Chapter Five

Verse 1. *Him that sat on the throne was God*, for he is said to be the creator of all things, in the last verse of the preceding chapter. What was called a book in old times is the same as we call a roll; something like a long strip of paper and rolled up from one end. Let us remember we are in a book of signs or symbols. This book or roll is a symbol of the future events, and being sealed signifies that the future is unrevealed to all unless the seals can be broken so that the writing can be read. There were seven seals which is the complete number again, signifying that the future is hidden from the world. If the seals can be broken and the writing read, each one will reveal a part of the events that are to come in the future.

Verse 2. *Strong angel proclaiming.* He was asking a question with *a loud voice* which signifies a general call in order to give all a chance. The call was to the task of opening the book which means to make predictions of the coming events.

Verse 3. *Heaven.* (where God dwells), *earth*, (the abode of living human beings), *under the earth* (the abode of departed spirits). These three regions take in all intelligent creatures in the universe. Note that no man in any place was able to respond, which signifies that the future is a sealed book as far as uninspired beings are concerned, whether they be in heaven or on earth.

Verse 4. Since the loud request had been made by a strong angel the importance of the subject was evident, which explains why John wept when no one (the word for man is not in the original) was able to respond. *Read the book, neither to look thereon*, signifies that unless the seals can be broken, no uninspired person can even see the writing much less read (understand and interpret) it.

Verse 5. *One of the elders* means one of the four and twenty who represent the two great systems of religion. He was able to console John and bid him refrain from weeping, because there was one available who would be able to open the book. *Lion of the tribe of Juda* (Judah). In **Genesis 49:9, 10** this lion is predicted and **Hebrews 7:14** tells us that Christ came from the tribe of Juda. *Root of David* means that Christ was

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the very important descendant of David the son of Jesse (**Isaiah 11:1, 10**). This conversation represents the leaders of the two organized systems of religion as understanding that the great plans in which they were only agents in the service of God, were made good through the merits of this Lion.

Verse 6. *In the midst*, etc. Thayer gives us the rendering as follows: “**And I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and the elders.**” He then offers his explanation as follows: “In the vacant space between the throne and the living creatures (on one side) and elders (on the other side), accordingly nearest the throne.” ***As it had been slain.*** A lamb may be slain and then come back to life still bearing the marks of its death wounds. Thus Jesus was permitted to retain the wound marks until He had completed the great work with His apostles. (See **John 20:20.**) mighty. (See **Psalms 148:1-10.**) ***Him that sitteth upon the throne*** is God the Father and ***the Lamb*** is God the Son.

Verse 14. The ***four creatures*** and the ***four and twenty elders*** had already expressed their admiration (verses **8, 9**), and when all these other beings uttered their praises it caused the creatures and elders to voice their pleasure by an ***amen*** of approval.