

Revelation 4:1-8:1 The vision of heaven and the seven seals

4:2 the throne of God is the very center of the universe

4:4 the twenty-four elders = an exalted angelic order as a heavenly counterpart to the twenty-four priestly and Levitical orders (1 Chron. 24:4; 25:9-31)

4:6 four living creatures = an exalted order of angelic beings, perhaps cherubs (Ezekiel 10:14; Exodus 25:20)

5:2 To break the seals means to reveal and carry out God's plan

"When the scroll is opened and the seals are broken, then the universe is governed in the interest of the Church. . . But if the scroll is not opened it means that there will be no protection for God's children in the hours of bitter trial; no judgments upon a persecuting world; no ultimate triumph for believers; no new heaven and earth; no future inheritance" (Hendriksen).

5:5 see Genesis 49:10 and Isaiah 11:1 and Romans 15:12

5:6 lamb is used 28 times of Jesus

Horns and eyes = perfect power and wisdom

Compare 4:11 and 5:9

5:9 a bloody and broad atonement

5:10 a directed and triumphant atonement

1:6; 5:10; 20:6 (Exodus 19:6)

The heavenly chorus offers to Jesus the prayers of the saints (5:8), prayers that invite the plagues he will soon release for their vindication (6:10; 8:4-6). For the connection between prayer and incense, see Psalm 141:2 and Luke 1:10.

6:1-4 The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

The colors symbolize conquest (white), bloodshed* (red), scarcity due to injustice (black), and death (pale, livid) [Ezekiel 14:21]

Notice, the forces of evil are allowed to do their worst before the record of divine intervention is read!

Read p. 63 from Wright

White: 3:4, 5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9, 13; 19:14

For the Church, these seals bring about the sanctification of His church and the spread of His kingdom.

6:12-15 final judgment

6:13 see Isaiah 34:4

6:14 see Jeremiah 4:24

6:15 what sinners dread most is not death but the revealed presence of God

Those who might normally feel secure will be utterly undone: notice the 7 (Hosea 10:8; Psalm 76:7)

6:17 see Nahum 1:6. The question posed here is answered in the next chapter: 7:9—the 144,000!

7:3 see Ezekiel 9

Dan, Ephraim

3, indicating the Trinity, multiplied by 4, indicating the entire creation (do not His people come from the north, east, west, and south?) equals 12. In the OT 12 stood for the tribes and in the NT for the apostles (see 21:9-14, 17). 12 (the OT) times 12 (the NT) = 144.

In order to emphasize that not a small portion is meant, this number 144 is multiplied by 1,000 (10 x 10 x 10), a perfect cube (see 21:16).

The 144,000 do not refer to ethnic Israelites. The number symbolizes spiritual Israel, the Church of Jesus Christ (throughout all time)! See also 14:1.

5:5-6 heard and saw // 7:4, 9 (1:12)

Gen 13:16; 15:5; 32:12

“Let the winds blow; they will not harm God’s people. Let the judgments come; they will not hurt his elect” (Hendriksen).

The Lamb becoming Shepherd is an interesting reversal of roles.

7:15-17 makes rapture unlikely (1 Thess. 4:13-18). “To follow the Lamb and to be identified with him is to share his experience of the world’s hatred and the dragon’s hostility” (Spilsbury, p. 81).

[The verb translated “kill” in 6:4 is used in the NT exclusively by John: 1 John 3:12 (twice); Rev. 5:6, 9, 12; 6:4, 9; 13:3, 8; 18:24. Notice that the Church is treated as Jesus had been]

Silence (8:1): is something decisive about to happen? Terrible judgments? (see Habakkuk 2:20; Zephaniah 1:7; Zechariah 2:13).