

# 5. The Scroll

John is transported to God's throne room to provide a first-hand account of the end-times. *After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this."* (Revelation 4:1) From God's throne room John observed epic world events centuries ahead of time.

*At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it.* (Revelation 4:2) John was given vision into future kingdoms and events. This phrase, *in the Spirit*, means something like, "I then saw a new vision" (Revelation 1:10; 17:3; 21:10). Here John sees a *throne in heaven*, with God sitting on that throne. John described God in terms of the reflection and brilliance of precious stones (Revelation 4:3).

*Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads.* (Revelation 4:4) The elders dress as Jesus had promised the

churches, with crowns (Revelation 2:10, Smyrna), and white clothing (Revelation 3:5, Sardis). King David organized God's priesthood into 24 divisions (1 Chronicles 24:4-19). Some speculate the twenty-four elders are the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament, plus twelve apostles of the New Testament.

*In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. (Revelation 4:6-8)* These four angels are a composite of high-ranking angels, specifically cherubim and seraphim; they are an exalted order of angels (Ezekiel 1:5-25; Isaiah 6:1-4).

*The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Revelation 4:10-11)* As elders lay their crowns before the throne, they demonstrate that the honor of wearing crowns belong to God alone.

*Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. (Revelation 5:1)* This scroll is a critical legal document; some believe it to be the deed to planet earth. This scroll has also been referred to as "the redemptive plan of God" or as "God's

last will and testament.” The scroll is in God’s right hand to underscore power and authority.

*And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. (Revelation 5:2-3)* When no one came forward, John wept. John understood the need for God to finish his redemptive plan for earth. *I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. (Revelation 5:4)* The issue is not whether anyone is strong enough, but whether anyone is *worthy* enough to break the seals (Isaiah 29:11; Daniel 12:4). The seals must be broken to read the document, for the document to take effect.

Soon the announcement comes that Jesus is worthy to execute God’s plan. *Then one of the elders said to me, “do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.” (Revelation 5:5)* The reclaiming of the earth is initiated through the opening of the seven seals. As each seal is broken, God’s plan is advanced (Revelation 6).

Jesus, called the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, was on the throne. John was expecting a lion to come forward; instead he sees a Lamb come forward to break the seals. *Then I saw a Lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne (Revelation 5:6).* God (the Father) then relinquishes possession of the scroll to Jesus (Revelation 5:7).