

Chapter 7

The Scroll

End-time events start in heaven, with a scene inside God’s throne room. Attention soon focuses on an ancient scroll that sealed tight with seven seals. Sealed so securely that no one can open it; nobody can implement this document.

God calls John from earth, to heaven to witness the end-times and record his observations in a book titled, Revelation. John soon witnesses events in heaven and on earth centuries before they occur.

The following verse provides the biggest break—likely the most significant transition to new material in the entire book of Revelation. *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) This verse turns the reader—using *after this ... after this* twice.

This transition breaks off the first three chapters of Revelation—cut from the chapters that lie ahead.

DISPENSATIONAL ERROR

Prominent prophecy interpreters see the rapture of the church in this single verse—a rapture where the entire church on earth is rapidly snatched up into heaven.

Supporters of a complete rapture at this verse make many valid points. For example, there is an early rapture—just not this early. Dispensationalists make assumptions that simply cannot be proven, as outlined in an appendix to this book.

*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 spiritual vision into future kingdoms and events. This same phrase, *in the Spirit*, in other verses 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.*

And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. (Revelation 4:3) The occupant of the throne is described as being like jasper and carnelian. This jasper is clear as crystal. (Revelation 21:11) The carnelian is red—the color of shed blood. Like red, the green emerald color is also primary color of the rainbow. Ezekiel observed that near God was a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. (Ezekiel 1:28)

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. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and pearls of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. ... (Revelation 4:4-6)

Some speculate the *twenty-four elders* are the twelve patriarchs of the Old Testament, plus the twelve apostles of the New Testament. Their *white* robes symbolize purity, washed clean by the blood of the lamb. (Romans 5:9; 1 John 1:7) The elders dress as Jesus had promised the churches, with *crowns* (Revelation 2:10, Smyrna), and *white* clothing (Revelation 3:5, Sardis). Since these elders do priestly functions, such as burning incense, they are a royal priesthood. (Revelation 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9) The priesthood was also divided into 24 courses during the time of King David. (1 Chronicles 24)

The *seven spirits* of God, appearing as *seven lamps*, empowers the church and gives light to the world. (Zechariah 4:1-6; John 14:15-18) The number “seven” signifies fullness, completeness or perfection.

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. (see Revelation 4:6-8)

These *four living creatures* are an exalted order of angelic beings. Being *covered with eyes*, nothing escapes their attention. These four angels are a composite of previously seen high-ranking angels, specifically cherubim and seraphim. (Ezekiel 1; Isaiah 6) The cherubim in Ezekiel portray four creatures, each having four faces. Here four faces appear on four creatures, with each creature having one face.

The 24 elders make an awesome statement by laying *their crowns before the throne*. They are saying that the honor of wearing crowns belong to God alone. Through actions and words, the elders and angels worship God. (Revelation 4:8-11)

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 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 held in God’s right hand to underscore power and authority. God wrote the Ten Commandments in a similar manner, on tablets that had *writing on both sides*. (Exodus 32:15-16)

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 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 for the document to be read—and for the document to take effect. This document is of no value until someone opens and reads it.

Soon the announcement comes. Jesus is fully *worthy* to carry out the perfect plan of God. *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 attached to the document. As each seal is broken, God’s plan is advanced. (Revelation 6)

Jesus is linked to Judah’s tribe, and to the line of King David. This ancestry was foretold centuries before Jesus’ birth. *Lion of the tribe of Judah* is a messianic title—taken from when Judah was called a *lion’s cub*. (Genesis 49:9)

The *Root of David* looks forward to a perfect king to rule on earth, in the line of David. (Isaiah 11:1, 10)

Jesus, called the *Lion of the tribe of Judah*, was sitting on the throne. John was expecting a lion to come forward from the throne. Instead, John sees a *Lamb looking as if it had been slain* come forward to break the seals. Surprise—it was no Lion at all, but a *Lamb* who stepped forward! *Then I saw a Lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne ...* (Revelation 5:6)

Ready to conduct business—Jesus takes scroll from the Father’s right hand. *He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.* (Revelation 5:7)