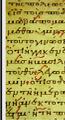


Revelation: Vision of Heaven (Rev. 4:1–5:14)

General Outline

Prologue	Church		World		Heaven	Epilogue
Jesus/John Revelation of J/Christ (1:1–8)	Vision of Son/Man (1:9–20)	Judgment Seven Letters (2–3)	Vision of Heaven (4–5)	Judgment Cycle (6–20)	Vision of Victory (21–22)	Revelation of J/Christ (22:6–21)
						

General Outline



Heaven (4–5): Overview

I. Literary Overview

A. Literary Structure

two chapters, one vision

one literary unit

significance: mutually interpretive

B. Literary Point

theological: Christ fulfills God's original creative purposes by subduing human rebellion

pastoral: reassures persecuted believers of God's sovereign control and faith's vindication

Heaven (4–5): Overview

II. Literary Connections

A. Imagery of Exalted Christ

literary tie back to sitting on throne in 3:21

heavenly reality expressed in Seven Letters

B. Linguistic Ties

“receive” (2:28; 5:7–9); “conquer” (3:21; 5:5)

“seven spirits” (3:1; 4:5; 5:6);

“white clothing” (3:5, 18; 4:4)

“saints, thrones” (3:21; 4:4)

“crowns” (2:10; 3:11; 4:4)

“open door” (3:8, 20; 4:1)

Heaven (4–5): Overview

II. Literary Connections

C. Thematic Ties

kingdom, ruling (1:5–6, throne room scene)

overcoming (promise sections, 5:5–6)

III. Literary Background

A. Possible Liturgical Settings

possible sources

synagogue morning liturgy

parody of Roman ceremonial cult

heavenly pattern for church to emulate?

Heaven (4–5): Overview

III. Literary Background

B. Possible Old Testament Settings

Daniel 7: about 14 parallel elements

Ezekiel 1–2: some similarities

throne room, heavenly temple: Isa. 6:1–4

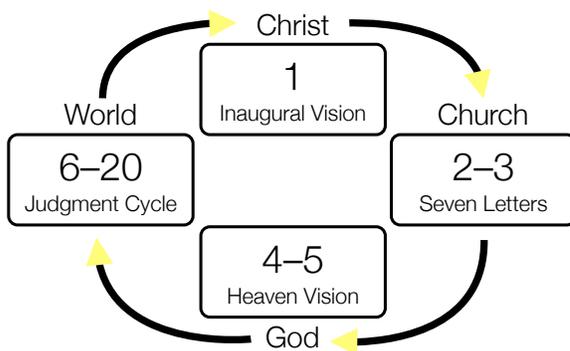
sanctuary, open door: 11:19; 15:5

flashing, lightning, thunder: 4:5; 11:19; 16:18

seven lamps as temple lampstand: 4:5

altar of incense: 8:3; 9:13; 16:7

Heaven (4–5): Overview



Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
 - A. John's Ascension (4:1)
 - "I saw . . . and behold"
 - commonplace wording in OT visions
 - note parallel with Dan. 7:6
 - "after these things"
 - notes literary shift: 7:1, 9; 15:5; 18:1; 19:1
 - literary device, not sequence
 - "trumpet . . . first voice"
 - invitation from Jesus of Inaugural Vision
 - heavenly realities behind Son of Man vision

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
 - A. John's Ascension (4:1)
 - "come up here"
 - transference to God's council
 - John's authority on par with OT prophets
 - "things which must happen after these things"
 - same as 1:19: allusion to Dan. 2:28–29
 - Daniel context is "last days" = inaugurated

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
 - B. Heaven's Description (4:2–7)
 - "throne"
 - greatest sign of Revelation = sovereignty
 - background in OT theophanies (esp. Eze. 1)
 - "jasper, carnelian, rainbow, emerald" (v. 3)
 - stones reflect God's glory
 - meaning of rainbow debated

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
 - B. Heaven's Description (4:2–7)
 - "24 elders, white robes, golden crowns" (v. 4)
 - meaning debated: stars, angels, saints, patriarchs, apostles, Levite orders
 - general assumption is believers reigning
 - "lightning, rumblings, thunder" (v. 5)
 - repeated almost verbatim concluding each judgment series (8:5; 11:19; 16:18)
 - ties source of later judgments back to God

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
- B. Heaven's Description (4:2–7)
 - “seven flames . . . seven spirits” (v. 5)
 - cf. Zech. 4:2–3, 10
 - manifold operation of Spirit
 - “sea of glass like crystal” (v. 6)
 - positive or negative image in Revelation?
 - chaotic powers of evil God conquers? (21:1)

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- I. Chapter 4: John's Prophetic Trance (4:1–7)
- B. Heaven's Description (4:2–7)
 - “four living creatures” (v. 6)
 - image combines Eze. 1 with Isa. 6 six wings
 - usually taken as representing creation
 - Reddish (highest order of angels) is unusual
 - mediate God's judgments (6:1–8; 15:7)
 - “lion, ox, human face, eagle” (v.7)
 - zoomorphism common to apocalyptic
 - early Catholic tradition = four evangelists

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- II. Chapter 4: Heaven's Unceasing Worship (4:8–11)
- A. Living Creatures Worship (4:8)
 - “six wings . . . full of eyes” (v. 8)
 - wings taken from seraphim of Isa. 6
 - eyes indicate full spiritual insight, knowledge
 - “day and night without ceasing”
 - all of living as a perfected worship experience
 - the goal of all creation
 - “holy, holy, holy”
 - Isa. 6:3 theophany (cf. Dan. 7; Exe. 1)
 - Revelation's hymns summarize its theology

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- II. Chapter 4: Heaven's Unceasing Worship (4:8–11)
- A. Living Creatures Worship (4:8)
 - “Lord God, the Almighty” (v. 8)
 - LXX motif (Amos 3:13; 4:13; 5:14–16; 9:5–6, 15; Hos. 12:6; Nah. 3:5; Zech. 10:13; Mal. 2:16)
 - broadside to Roman imperial propaganda
 - “who is, who was, who is to come” (cf. 1:4)
 - Jewish exegetical tradition
 - “to come” present or eschatological?
 - sovereignty emphasis to motivate persecuted

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- II. Chapter 4: Heaven's Unceasing Worship (4:8–11)
 - B. Twenty-four Elders Join Worship (4:9–11)
 - “the one who is seated on the throne” (v. 9)
 - might be deliberately ambiguous: to allow simultaneous comparison of emperor, God
 - heaven's worship unified
 - God's sovereignty uncontested
 - Judgment Cycle brings earth to this reality
 - “who lives forever and ever”
 - compare Roman dynastic struggles
 - Roman imperial propaganda blasted again

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- II. Chapter 4: Heaven's Unceasing Worship (4:8–11)
 - B. Twenty-four Elders Join Worship (4:9–11)
 - “elders fall . . . cast their crowns” (v. 10)
 - Hellenistic kingship tradition Romans inherited
 - symbol of complete submission, loyalty
 - another political broadside
 - “singing”
 - heaven's primary mode and earth's paradigm
 - Revelation's hymns summarize its theology

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- II. Chapter 4: Heaven's Unceasing Worship (4:8–11)
 - B. Twenty-four Elders Join Worship (4:9–11)
 - “the Lord and our God” (v. 11)
 - similar to Domitian's title (Suetonius *Dom.* 13.2)
 - another political broadside (unless Roman historians have misrepresented Domitian)
 - “you created all things”
 - creation theology central to eschatology
 - the one who consummates creation's goal
 - fulfills “Alpha and Omega” title

Heaven: Sovereignty (4:1–11)

- III. Chapter 4: Concise Summary
 - A. Vision: a throne, a sovereign, a song
 - B. Truth: a sovereignty controlling human destiny

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- I. Cosmic Question (5:1–4)
 - A. Scene Extension (5:1)
 - “And I saw a book” (v. 11)
 - heavenly throne room scene continues
 - new element added: a book
 - Old Testament as messianic?
 - Great Tribulation?
 - human destiny?
 - eschatological inheritance?
 - book form: scroll or codex? either could take multiple seals

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- I. Cosmic Question (5:1–4)
 - A. Scene Extension (5:1)
 - “written on the inside and outside” (v. 1)
 - idea of fullness of contents
 - Roman wills, contracts suggested
 - “sealed with seven seals”
 - partial concealing role
 - contents revealed progressively
 - guaranteeing contents not falsified

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- I. Cosmic Question (5:1–4)
 - B. Crisis Point (5:2–4)
 - “strong angel” (v. 2)
 - announcement imminent
 - similar to Dan. 4:13–14
 - “Who is worthy?”
 - unlimited call = cosmic question
 - highlights Christ’s unique role
 - “no one was found” (v. 3)
 - serious cosmic conundrum
 - sets stage for dramatic announcement

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- I. Cosmic Question (5:1–4)
 - B. Crisis Point (5:2–4)
 - “heaven . . . earth . . . under the earth” (v. 3)
 - God’s unique domain
 - chapter 4’s hymn to God falsified?
 - asserted sovereignty defeated?
 - praised glory premature?
 - creator worthiness falsified?
 - “I wept” (v. 4)
 - God’s almighty glory challenged
 - earlier worship scene negated

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

A. New Revelation (5:5)

“then one of the elders” (v. 5)

links back to chapter 4 (God’s sovereignty)

God vindicates his own Name

“Do not weep”

revelation is forthcoming

infers the book will be opened

subliminal message to persecuted believers?

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

A. Dual Messianic Titles (5:5)

“Lion of the tribe of Judah”

first title from Gen. 49:9

taken messianically by Jews

“Root of David”

second title from Isa. 11:1

taken messianically by Jews

original contexts: overcoming Jewish enemies

John’s context: vindicating God’s sovereignty

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

A. Dual Messianic Titles (5:5)

“has conquered”

power to break open the seals

overcoming theme of Revelation

Promise sections of Seven Letters

thematic tie into Judgment Cycle

Fulfillment theme of final visions

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

A. Slaughtered Lamb (5:6)

“in the midst . . . throne . . . beings . . . elders”

reminder of the throne room setting

major characters introduced so far

“Lamb standing”

premier image of Jesus in Revelation (28/29x)

redefines Jewish messianic titles of 5:5

high Christology in the making

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)
 - A. Slaughtered Lamb (5:6)
 - “slaughtered”
 - abrupt, incongruous image—stunning reversal
 - OT background: Passover, Isaiah 53

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)
 - A. Slaughtered Lamb (5:6)
 - “slaughtered”
 - paradoxical image (slaughtered . . . standing)
 - “slaughtered” is perfect tense = on-going consequences of past act
 - “standing” is resurrection imagery, as in Prologue, Inaugural Vision, Seven Letters (1:5; 1:18; 2:8)
 - theological key to entire “conquering” motif
 - transforms, transcends messianic traditions

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

“In Rev. 5:6 traditional Jewish messianic imagery of the apocalyptic warrior lamb is transformed radically into a unique Passover Lamb who dies but lives. In the truth of this Passover imagery—a slaughtered lamb standing—resides the heart of Christian faith and practice, the soul of the nature and mission of the church, and the hermeneutical key to Revelation’s portrait of the eschatological future.”

—Gerald L. Stevens

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

- II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)
 - B. Additional Description (5:6)
 - “having seven horns”
 - Danielic power symbol (DAn. 7:7–8:24)
 - seven as fulness = all powerful
 - “seven eyes . . . seven spirits of God”
 - Zechariah 3–4 background
 - imagery for Holy Spirit
 - “sent out into all the earth”
 - effective execution of God’s redemptive plan
 - agent of messianic judgments in Judgment C.

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

C. Lamb's Unique Action (5:7)

“he came . . . he took”

unique action = approaching throne: no other heavenly being ever makes such a move

corresponds to Dan. 7:13 = only time in OT a divine messianic figure portrayed approaching throne, receiving authority

equivalent to NT exaltation language (B-M)

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

II. Cosmic Answer (5:5–7)

D. Summary of Symbolism

John intends to portray fulfillment of Daniel 7

Such OT theophanies have judgment nuances

Revelation preserves these judgment themes

Fulfillment is in the church (Son of Man, saints)

Concluding hymns are interpretive summaries

Lamb's redemption consummates God's creation

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

A. The Redeemed Worship (5:8–10)

“they fell before the Lamb” (beings, elders)

Lamb receives same worship as does God

Christology in the making

“harps . . . golden bowls . . . prayers of saints”

bowls/prayers tie seal/trumpet judgments

symbolism = vindication (cf. 6:9–11; 8:3–4)

“they sing a new song” (v. 9)

OT background: new song after God's victory

“new” = God's new creation in Christ

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

A. The Redeemed Worship (5:8–10)

“worthy are you . . . to take . . . to open” (v. 9)

Jesus' deity (Inaugural Vision, 1:14, 16; 3:14)

Christology in the making

“because you were slaughtered”

allusion to the cross (cf. “by his blood,” 1:5)

implicit pattern for the persecuted

“you purchased to God by your blood” (cf. 1:5)

Christ's death as God's victory (cf. Phil. 2:8)

Jesus' death opens God's book

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

A. The Redeemed Worship (5:8–10)

“tribe, tongue, people, nation” (v. 9)

symbolic fourfold: entire earthly sphere

consummated work among humanity

“kingdom . . . priests . . . will reign” (v. 10)

deliberate echo of Prologue (1:6)

alludes to Exodus redemption (Ex. 19:6)

“will reign” is future tense

question of nuance: predictive or gnomic?

depends on eschatological presuppositions

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

B. Heaven Joins Worship (5:11–12)

“angels . . . myriads” (v. 11)

angelic chorus joins redeemed (cf. Dan. 7:10)

reaffirms the song of the redeemed

“worthy is the slaughtered Lamb” (v. 12)

“worthy” = deity assertion validated

“slaughtered Lamb” = death victory validated

“to receive the power . . .” (sevenfold list)

sevenfold: complete, perfective reign of Christ

depends on eschatological presuppositions

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

C. Cosmos Joins Worship (5:13)

“and every creature” (v. 13)

creation consummates the chorus

proper worship of God reaches crescendo

“heaven, earth, under the earth, sea”

the living, the dead, the unknown

similar in thought to Eph. 3:10

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

C. Cosmos Joins Worship (5:13)

“to the one sitting on the throne and . . . Lamb”

equality of worship now made explicit

Lamb = God = continued work of creation

Christology in the making

“blessing, honor, glory, strength”

fourfold: all creation echoes heaven’s worship

dramatic crescendo of cosmic worship

Heaven: Salvation (5:1–14)

III. Cosmic Worship (5:8–14)

D. Worship Response (5:14)

“And the four living beings were saying ‘Amen!’”

liturgical signal for congregational response?

the “Amen” of God receives the Amen (B-M)

“And the elders fell down and worshipped”

elders: perhaps representing people of God

perpetual posture of heaven is worship

IV. Chapter 5: Concise Summary

A. Vision: a scroll, a savior, a song

B. Truth: a salvation creating an eternal kingdom
