

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Week 238 – Revelation 3:7-5:5

Day 1186: Revelation 3:7-13

Verse 7

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Φιλαδελφείᾳ ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, ὁ ἔχων τὴν κλεῖν Δαυὶδ, ὁ ἀνοίγων καὶ οὐδεὶς κλείσει, καὶ κλείων καὶ οὐδεὶς ἀνοίγει·

Philadelphia was the newest of the cities addressed in these seven letters. It stood in a region where earthquakes were common and had been totally destroyed along with Sardis in 17 AD. The city had later been rebuilt and was devoted to Hellenistic culture – being called 'little Athens' for all its temples.

ὁδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

ἀληθινός, η, ον real, genuine, true

Cf. 6:10 where applied to God. Jesus is God and is the true Messiah.

κλεις, ειδος f key

ἀνοίγω open

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing

κλειω shut, shut up, lock

Because the letter is primarily concerned with the church's relation to the Jews, it opens with Christ's claim to be the true Messiah, who holds the key of David. John echoes here the language of Is 22:22 in which the key of the house of David is entrusted to a new steward Eliakim, as a symbol of his complete control over the royal household and of his authority to grant or refuse access to the king's presence. Morris thinks that the opening and shutting refers to admission to the city of David, the heavenly Jerusalem.

Mounce adds "It may be an intentional contrast with the practice of the local synagogue in excommunicating Christian Jews."

Verse 8

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα - ἰδοὺ δέδωκα ἐνώπιόν σου θύραν ἠνεωγμένην, ἣν οὐδεὶς δύναται κλείσαι αὐτήν - ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν, καὶ ἐτήρησάς μου τὸν λόγον, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσω τὸ ὄνομά μου.

δέδωκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s διδωμι

ἐνώπιον see v.2

θυρα, ας f door, gate

ἠνεωγμένην Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc s

ἀνοίγω

Most think this refers to opportunity for missionary activity (1 Cor 16:9, cf. 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3).

"Ramsay explains the expression in terms of Philadelphia's geographic position at the eastern end of the valley leading up onto the great central plain. As the 'keeper of the gateway to the plateau' it had been given a unique opportunity to carry the gospel to the cities of Phrygia... A different interpretation, however, fits the context better. The preceding verse spoke of a messianic kingdom whose access was under the absolute control of Christ. He is the one who possesses the key and can open and shut at will. Now in verse 8 he reminds the Christians at Philadelphia who may have been excommunicated from the local synagogue (vs. 9) that he has placed before them an open door into the eternal kingdom, and no one can shut it." Mounce. So also Morris.

δυναμαι can, be able to

ὅτι μικρὰν ἔχεις δύναμιν continues the thought of the first four words. The RSV makes this explicit by repeating 'I know' and continuing 'that you have little power...' Probably a small congregation that had not made a major impact on the city.

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

ἠρνήσω Verb, aor midd dep indic, 2 s

ἄρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

The aorists suggest a particular period of trial that had been faced.

Verse 9

ἰδοὺ διδῶ ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς τοῦ Σατανᾶ, τῶν λεγόντων ἑαυτοὺς Ἰουδαίους εἶναι, καὶ οὐκ εἰσὶν ἀλλὰ ψεύδονται· ἰδοὺ ποιήσω αὐτοὺς ἵνα ἦξουσιν καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν ἐνώπιον τῶν ποδῶν σου, καὶ γνώσιν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἠγάπησά σε.

διδῶ Verb, pres act indic (variant form)

διδωμι

Cf 2:9 By rejecting the Messiah they have lost their right to claim that they are Jews. Cf. Rom 2:28,29; Gal 6:16. In opposing Christ and his people they show themselves to be the servants of Satan, cf. Jn 8:44.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ψευδομαι lie, speak untruth, deceive

ἦκω come

προσκυνεω fall at another's feet
 πους, ποδος m foot

Cf. the OT prophecies in Is 45:14; 49:23; Zech 8:20ff. which are in the context of the conversion of the Gentile nations (Is 49:6). Mounce says, "What the Jews fondly expected from the Gentiles, they themselves will be forced to render to the Christians. They will play the role of the heathen and acknowledge that the church is the true Israel of God." Mounce thinks that the reference is not to conversion but simply eschatological "acknowledgement that the church is the object of Christ's love."

γνωσις Verb, fut act indic, 3 s γινωσκω
 αγαπαω love, show love for
 σε Pronoun, acc s συ

Verse 10

ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, κάγω σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἔρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

ὑπομονη, ης f patience, endurance

The believers at Philadelphia had kept "Christ's command to endure patiently for his sake." Bruce.

καγω from και ἐγω and I, I also

ἐκ τῆς ὥρας is either:
 i) 'Keep you from undergoing trial...', or
 ii) 'Keep you right through the trial...'
 The latter is the more likely. Cf Jn 17:15.

ὥρα, ας f hour, moment, period of time
 πειρασμος, ου m period or process of testing, trial

Reference is to the worldwide πειρασμος which is the subject of the rest of this book.

μελλω (before an infin) be going, be about
 οἰκουμενη, ης f world, inhabited earth
 ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire
 πειραζω test, put to the test
 κατοικεω live, inhabit

Verse 11

ἔρχομαι ταχύ· κράτει ὃ ἔχεις, ἵνα μηδεις λάβῃ τὸν στέφανόν σου.

ταχυ adv quickly, without delay, soon

Cf. 1:1

κρατεω see 2:25
 μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing
 στεφανος, ου m see 2:10

Philadelphia was well known for its games and festivals.

Verse 12

ὁ νικῶν ποιήσω αὐτὸν στῦλον ἐν τῷ ναῷ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ ἔξω οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ ἔτι, καὶ γράψω ἐπ' αὐτὸν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ μου καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς πόλεως τοῦ θεοῦ μου, τῆς καινῆς Ἱερουσαλήμ, ἡ καταβαίνουσα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ μου, καὶ τὸ ὄνομά μου τὸ καινόν.

νικαω see 2:11

στυλος, ου m pillar, column

Cf. Gal 2:9; 1 Tim 3:15. A picture of stability and permanence.

ναος, ου m temple, sanctuary

ἐξω adv. out, outside, away

ἐτι still, yet, any more

"To a city that had experienced devastating earthquakes which caused people to flee into the countryside and establish temporary dwellings there, the promise of permanence within the New Jerusalem would have a special meaning." Mounce.

γραφω write

πολις, εως f city, town

καινος, η, ον new

καταβαινω come down, descend

ουρανος, ου m heaven

"The impact of the threefold inscription is to show that the faithful belong to God, hold citizenship in the New Jerusalem, and in a special way are related to Christ." Mounce. Cf. 7:3; 14:1; 22:4 also Gal 4:26; Phil 3:20. Reddish comments, "Now those who have kept 'the name' will be inscribed with the name."

Verse 13

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὠτος n see 2:7

Day 1187: Revelation 3:14-22**Verse 14**

Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Λαοδικεῖα ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ Ἀμὴν, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ πιστὸς καὶ ἀληθινός, ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ θεοῦ·

Laodicea was an extremely wealthy city, famous for its wool and textiles. Agricultural and commercial prosperity had resulted in Laodicea also becoming a centre for banking. It also had a notable medical school which, among other things, was famed for its eye-salve. However, the city lacked a natural water supply. Its water was piped in from hot springs 6 miles away, arriving tepid and so impure as to have an emetic effect. There was a sizable Jewish community in the city. The church had probably been founded during Paul's stay at Ephesus. Paul wrote them a letter (Col 4:16) which was subsequently lost.

ὄδε, ἦδε, τοδε see 2:1
μαρτυς, μαρτυρος dat pl μαρτυσιν m
witness

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, reliable

"Ford suggests that it was added to clarify for the non-Hebrew-speaking audience the meaning of 'amen'... It presents the trustworthiness of Christ in sharp contrast to the unfaithfulness of the Laodicean church." Mounce. God is called the Amen in Isa 65:16.

ἀληθινος, η, ον see v.7
ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin
κτισις, εως f creation

Cf. Col 1:15. The Laodiceans should have been familiar with the Colossian letter (see Col 4:16).

Verse 15

Οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι οὔτε ψυχρὸς εἶ οὔτε ζεστός. ὄφελον ψυχρὸς ἦς ἢ ζεστός.
οὔτε not, nor (οὔτε ... οὔτε neither ... nor)

ψυχρος, α, ον cold
ζεστος, η, ον hot
ὄφελον would that, I wish that
ἦς Verb, imperfect indic, 2 s εἶμι
ἢ or

"In an important article, Rudwick and Green argue that the adjectives 'hot,' 'cold,' and 'lukewarm' are not to be taken as describing the spiritual fervour (or lack of it) of people. The contrast is between the hot medicinal waters of Hierapolis and the cold, pure waters of Colossae. Thus the church in Laodicea 'was providing neither refreshment for the spiritually weary, nor healing for the spiritually sick. It was totally ineffective, and thus distasteful to the Lord'... On this interpretation the church is not being called to task for its spiritual temperature but for the barrenness of its works. Among the several advantages of this interpretation is the fact that it is no longer necessary to wonder why Christ would prefer the church to be 'cold' rather than 'lukewarm'." Mounce. See also Colin Hemer's Article in *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol 1, pp 317-319.

Verse 16

οὕτως, ὅτι χλιαρὸς εἶ καὶ οὔτε ζεστός οὔτε ψυχρὸς, μέλλω σε ἐμέσαι ἐκ τοῦ στόματός μου.

οὕτως thus, in this way
χλιαρος, α, ον tepid, lukewarm
μέλλω (before an infin) be going, be about
ἐμεω spit out, vomit
στομα, τος n mouth

Verse 17

ὅτι λέγεις ὅτι Πλούσιός εἰμι καὶ πεπλούτηκα καὶ οὐδὲν χρεῖαν ἔχω, καὶ οὐκ οἶδας ὅτι σὺ εἶ ὁ ταλαίπωρος καὶ ἐλεεινὸς καὶ πτωχὸς καὶ τυφλὸς καὶ γυμνός,

πλουσιος, α, ον rich
πεπλούτηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s
πλουτεω be rich, grow rich
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing
χρεια, ας f need, want
ταλαιπωρος, ον miserable, wretched
ἐλεεινος, η, ον pitiable
πτωχος, η, ον poor, pitiful
τυφλος, η, ον blind
γυμνος, η, ον naked, poorly dressed

Cf. 2:9.

Verse 18

συμβουλεύω σοι ἀγοράσαι παρ' ἐμοῦ χρυσίον πεπυρωμένον ἐκ πυρὸς ἵνα πλουτήσης, καὶ ἱμάτια λευκὰ ἵνα περιβάλη καὶ μὴ φανερωθῇ ἡ αἰσχύνη τῆς γυμνότητός σου, καὶ κολλ[ο]ύριον ἐγχεῖσαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου ἵνα βλέπῃς.
συμβουλεύω advise, counsel

ἀγοραζω buy, redeem
 χρυσιον, ου n gold
 πεπυρωμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc &
 n nom/acc s πυροομαι burn; perf. be
 refined
 πυρ, ος n fire
 ἱματιον, ου n see v.4
 λευκος, η, ον see v.4

"A contrast with the black woollen fabric for which for which the city was famous could be intended, but the figure of white garments as symbolic of righteousness is so widely used in Revelation (3:4,5; 4:4; 6:11; 7:9,13-14; 19:14) that no local allusion is necessary." Mounce.

περιβάλη Verb, aor act subj, 2 s
 περιβαλλω see v.5
 φανερωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s
 φανερω make known, reveal, make
 evident
 αἰσχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace
 γυμνοτης, ητος f nakedness
 κολλουριον, ου n eye salve

"Laodicea was known for its famous medical school ... and exported 'Phrygian powder' widely used as an eye-salve." Mounce.

ἐγγριω rub on (of ointment)
 βλεπω see, be able to see

Verse 19

ἐγω ὅσους ἐὰν φιλῶ ἐλέγχω καὶ παιδεύω·
 ζηήλευε οὖν καὶ μετανόησον.

Ramsay considers vv 19-22 an epilogue to all 7 letters but this view has attracted little support.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much
 as, whoever; pl. as many as, all
 φιλεω love, have deep feeling for

Charles comments, "It is a touching and unexpected manifestation of love to those who deserve it least among the seven churches." And Witherington writes, "Even with such people as the Laodiceans, Christ does not give up."

ἐλέγχω show (someone his) fault, convince
 (someone of his) error, rebuke
 παιδευω instruct, train, discipline, correct

Cf. Prov 3:11,12; Heb 12:5,6.

ζηλω be jealous of, be zealous
 μετανοεω repent

Verse 20

ἰδοὺ ἔστηκα ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν καὶ κρούω· ἐάν
 τις ἀκούσῃ τῆς φωνῆς μου καὶ ἀνοίξῃ τὴν
 θύραν, [καὶ] εἰσελεύσομαι πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ
 δειπνήσω μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς μετ' ἐμοῦ.

ἔστηκα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s ἵστημι
 stand

θυρα, ας f door, gate
 κρουω knock (at a door)

Present continuous.

ἀνοίξῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἀνοίγω
 open
 εἰσελεύσομαι Verb, fut midd sep indic, 1 s
 εἰσερχομαι enter, come in
 δειπνήσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s δειπνεω
 eat, dine

Cf. Lk 22:30. A picture of that fellowship with Christ which is an anticipation of the future messianic kingdom (cf. Mt 26:29; Rev 19:9).

Verse 21

ὁ νικῶν δώσω αὐτῷ καθίσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐν
 τῷ θρόνῳ μου, ὡς κἀγω ἐνίκησα καὶ
 ἐκάθισα μετὰ τοῦ πατρός μου ἐν τῷ
 θρόνῳ αὐτοῦ.

νικαω see 2:11

δώσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s δίδωμι
 καθιζω sit down, sit, take one's seat
 θρονος, ου m throne

Cf. Mt 19:28; 2 Tim 2:12.

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγω
 ἐκάθισα Verb, aor act indic, 1 s καθιζω

Verse 22

ὁ ἔχων οὖς ἀκουσάτω τί τὸ πνεῦμα λέγει
 ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις.

οὖς, ὠτος n see 2:7.

Postscript

Of the letters to the churches (and of the book of Revelation as a whole), Talbert writes, "It speaks harshly to those so-called Christian prophets who eagerly advocate assimilation to an alien ethos as something compatible with Christian faith. It also speaks a word of warning to the unthinking mass of Christians who simply want to share in the economic fruits of Babylon's wealth and luxury and are quite willing to assimilate in order to reap temporal benefits. Revelation addresses not so much those alienated from the larger society because they belong to the 'have-nots' as it does those with upward social mobility who want to be totally immersed in the larger society and are consciously or unconsciously willing to lose their souls in order to do so."

Day 1188: Revelation 4:1-6a**Verse 1**

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον, καὶ ἰδοὺ θύρα ἠνεωγμένη ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἡ φωνὴ ἡ πρώτη ἣν ἤκουσα ὡς σάλπιγγος λαλοῦσης μετ' ἐμοῦ λέγων, Ἀνάβα ὦδε, καὶ δεῖξω σοὶ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω
trans see, observe

θύρα, ας f see 3:20

ἠνεωγμένη Verb, perf pass ptc, f nom s
ἀνοίγω see 3:20

Cf. Ezek 1:1. The perfect tense suggests a door permanently opened, "perhaps as a result of Jesus' death and resurrection. The church has permanent and open access to heaven and to their God." Witherington.

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

πρωτος, η, ον first

σαλπιξ, ιγγος f see 1:9

λαλεω speak, talk

ἀνάβα Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s ἀναβαινω
go up, come up

ὦδε adv here

Cf. 1:19. "A true insight into history is gained only when we view all things from the vantage point of the heavenly throne." Mounce.

δείξω Verb, fut act indic, 3 s δεικνυμι
show, point out, reveal

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must

There is a necessity about what will happen, it is in the sovereign hand of God.

Verse 2

εὐθέως ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι· καὶ ἰδοὺ θρόνος ἔκειτο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον καθήμενος,

θρονος, ου m see 3:21

Fiorenza says that the central question of concern in the book of Revelation is "To whom does the earth belong? Who is the ruler of this world? The book's central theological symbol is therefore the *throne*, signifying either divine and liberating or demonic and death-dealing power."

κειμαι lie, be laid; exist; stand

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

Cf. 1 Kings 22:19; Isa 6:1.

Witherington argues that "John's portrayal of the throne scene [that follows] owes something ... to Roman scenes of the enthroned Emperor surrounded by his council and holding an open scroll in his hand. The hymns that emanate from the throne room in heaven can be seen in the light of the hymnic acclamations and acts of bowing down before the Emperor not only in the Roman court but also in the imperial cult in Asia, where the statue of the Emperor might have obeisance done before it. The scenes in Rev 4-5 then become John's rhetorical means of offering an alternative vision of who is really in charge of the world in which John's audience lives."

Verse 3

καὶ ὁ καθήμενος ὅμοιος ὄρασει λίθῳ ἰάσπιδι καὶ σαρδίῳ, καὶ ἶρις κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου ὅμοιος ὄρασει σμαραγδίνῳ.

ὅμοιος, α, ον like

The repeated use of ὅμοιος reflect John's attempt to describe the indescribable.

ὄρασις, εως f vision, appearance

λίθος, ου m stone, precious stone

ἰασπις, ιδος f jasper (a semi-precious stone of varying colours, but the jasper of the NT was probably green)

σαρδιον, ου n carnelian or cornelian (a semi-precious stone, usually red in colour)

Cf. Ezekiel 1.

ἶρις, ιδος f rainbow; varicoloured halo

The rainbow is also the symbol of the covenant. The covenant of mercy is part of the crowning glory of God.

κυκλοθεν prep with gen round, about
σμαραγδινος, η, ον made of emerald

Verse 4

καὶ κυκλόθεν τοῦ θρόνου θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρες, καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς θρόνους εἴκοσι τέσσαρας πρεσβυτέρους καθημένους περιβεβλημένους ἐν ἱματίοις λευκοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν στεφάνους χρυσοῦς.

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων four

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder, eldest

Most take as a symbol of the 12 Israelite patriarchs plus the 12 apostles – the totality of the Church. Mounce, however, argues that they are an exalted angelic order who serve and adore God. Witherington comments, "Whatever the twenty-four are, their function in the drama is secondary, for all they do in this book is fall down and worship God or play a harp and so are contributors to heavenly worship (cf. 5:8, 14; 11:16; 19:4 cf. 5:5; 7:13 where an elder is an interpreter). One thing is certain: there is no known parallel to these twenty-four elders in other Jewish apocalyptic literature, so this is a new and perhaps important element in John's vision... That these are symbols of the Christian elect is shown by their reaction when God acts on behalf of earthly Christians."

περιβεβλημένους Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc

πρὶ περιβαλλω see 3:5

ἱματιον, ου n see 3:4

λευκος, η, ον see 3:4

κεφαλη, ης f head

στεφανος, ου m see 2:10

χρυσους, η, ουν made of gold, golden

Their white garments speak of holiness and their golden crowns of royalty.

Verse 5

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου ἐκπορεύονται ἀστραπαὶ καὶ φωναὶ καὶ βρονταί· καὶ ἑπτὰ λαμπάδες πυρὸς καίόμεναι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου, ἃ εἰσὶν τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ,

ἐκπορευομαι go or come out

ἀστραπη, ης f lightning, ray

βροντη, ης f thunder

Symbolic of the awesome power and majesty of God. Cf. Ex. 19:16ff.

ἑπτα seven

λαμπας, αδος f lamp, lantern

πυρ, ος n fire

καιω light; pass be lit, burn

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

Witherington writes, "The burning lamps before the throne are said to be the seven spirits, again the angelic representatives of the churches keeping the churches' fires burning, in part by returning and being in the presence of God."

Verse 6a

καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου ὡς θάλασσα ὑαλίνη ὁμοία κρυστάλλῳ.

θάλασσα, ης f sea

ὑαλινος, η, ον of glass, clear as glass

ὁμοιος, α, ον see v.3

κρυσταλλος, ου m crystal; ice

"A visual phenomenon which adds to the awesome splendour of the throne-room scene." Mounce.

Witherington comments, "In view of 13:1, where the sea monster rises out of the glass sea, it is probably a reference to the reality of evil symbolised by the ancient image of the chaos waters. Even the source of evil is not outside the control of God."

Day 1189: Revelation 4:6b-11**Verse 6b**

Καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ κύκλῳ τοῦ θρόνου τέσσαρα ζῶα γέμοντα ὀφθαλμῶν ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν·

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἐν μ., εἰς μ. in the middle, among

Here meaning 'in the immediate vicinity'.

θρονος, ου m throne

κυκλω prep with gen round, around

τέσσαρες neut τέσσαρα gen τεσσαρων

four

ζωον, ου n living creature; animal

Cf. Ezekiel 1.

γεμω be full, be covered with

ἔμπροσθεν adv in front

ὀπισθεν adv. behind, on the back

"A consistent interpretation of the entire throne-room vision requires us to understand the living creatures as an exalted order of angelic beings who as the immediate guardians of the throne lead the heavenly hosts in worship and adoration of God. It is possible that they also represent the entire animate creation. That they are full of eyes before and behind (cf. vs. 8: 'round about and within') speaks of alertness and knowledge. Nothing escapes their notice." Mounce.

Verse 7

καὶ τὸ ζῶον τὸ πρῶτον ὅμοιον λέοντι, καὶ τὸ δεύτερον ζῶον ὅμοιον μόσχῳ, καὶ τὸ τρίτον ζῶον ἔχων τὸ πρόσωπον ὡς ἀνθρώπου, καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ζῶον ὅμοιον ἀετῷ πετομένῳ.

πρωτον adv. first
 ὁμοιος, α, ον like
 λεων, οντος m lion
 δευτερος, α, ον second
 μοσχος, ου m calf, young bull
 τριτος, η, ον third
 προσωπον, ου n face, appearance
 τεταρτος, η, ον fourth
 ἀετος, ου m eagle, vulture
 πετομαι fly

Hendriksen thinks this a fourfold picture of the qualities of these angelic beings: they have the strength of a lion, the ability to serve of an ox, the intelligence of a man, and the swiftness (to serve) of an eagle.

Verse 8

καὶ τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα, ἐν καθ' ἐν αὐτῶν ἔχων ἀνά πτέρυγας ἕξ, κυκλόθεν καὶ ἔσωθεν γέμουσιν ὀφθαλμῶν· καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἡμέρας καὶ νυκτὸς λέγοντες, Ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ, ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος.

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

ἐν καθ' ἐν each.

ἀνα prep used distributively with acc. each, each one

πτερυξ, υγος f wing

ἕξ six

Cf. the seraphim of Is 6:2.

κυκλοθεν adv all around, all about

ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside

Maybe, since they encircle the throne, the picture is of eyes both looking out, away from the throne, and in, towards the throne.

γεμω see v.6

ἀναπαυσις, εως f rest, resting-place, stopping

νυξ, νυκτος f night

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

παντοκρατωρ, ορος m Almighty

"To churches about to enter a period of severe testing and persecution a declaration of God's unlimited might would bring strength and encouragement..."

"Beyond this, his holiness and omnipotence stretch from eternity to eternity: he is the One 'who was and who is and who is to come' (cf... 1:4). The truth which finds expression in this phrase – an expression of God's 'I AM WHO I AM' in Exodus 3:14 – is repeated in the following verses where God is twice designated the one 'that liveth for ever and ever' (vss. 9-10)." Mounce.

Verse 9

καὶ ὅταν δωσουσιν τὰ ζῶα δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν καὶ εὐχαριστίαν τῷ καθήμενῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ, τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων,

ὅταν when, whenever

δωσουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl διδωμι

δοξα, ης f glory; praise

τιμη, ης f honour

εὐχαριστια, ας f thanksgiving

καθημαι sit, sit down, live

ζωω live, be alive

αἰῶνας Noun, acc pl αἰων, αἰωνος m age, eternity

Verse 10

πεσοῦνται οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἐνώπιον τοῦ καθήμενου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ ζῶντι εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, καὶ βαλοῦσιν τοὺς στεφάνους αὐτῶν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου λέγοντες,

πεσοῦνται Verb, fut midd/pass dep indic, 3 pl πιπτω fall, fall down

εἴκοσι twenty

τέσσαρες see v.6

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

ἐνώπιον prep with gen before

προσκυνεω worship

βαλοῦσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl βαλλω throw, throw down

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown

Acknowledging that their authority is a delegated authority. "The honour given them is freely returned to the One who alone is worthy of universal honour." Mounce.

Verse 11

Ἄξιός ἐστι, ὁ κύριος καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν, λαβεῖν τὴν δόξαν καὶ τὴν τιμὴν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν, ὅτι σὺ ἔκτισας τὰ πάντα, καὶ διὰ τὸ θέλημά σου ἦσαν καὶ ἐκτίθησαν.

ἀξιός, α, ον worthy, deserving

"Lilje notes that the first words of the hymn are taken from the political language of the day: 'Worthy art thou' greeted the entrance of the emperor in triumphal procession, and 'our Lord and God' was introduced into the cult of emperor worship by Domitian... For the Christian only the One upon the heavenly throne is worthy: the claims of all others are blasphemous." Mounce.

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω
 δυναμις, εως f power, strength, might
 κτιζω create, make
 θελημα, ατος n will, wish
 ἐκτίσθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl κτιζω

"This unusual phrase suggests that all things which are, existed first in the eternal will of God and through his will came into actual being at his appointed time." Mounce.

Witherington concludes concerning chapter 4, "This chapter is a vision in praise of the Creator God. The next is a vision in praise of the Redeemer God."

Day 1190: Revelation 5:1-5

Verse 1

Καὶ εἶδον ἐπὶ τὴν δεξιὰν τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου βιβλίον γεγραμμένον ἔσωθεν καὶ ὀπισθεν, κατεσφραγισμένον σφραγῖσιν ἑπτὰ.

εἶδον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl ὄραω
 see
 δεξιός, α, ον right, δεξια right hand
 καθημαι see 4:9
 βιβλίον, ου n book, scroll
 γεγραμμένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s γραφω write
 ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside
 ὀπισθεν adv. behind, on the back

The reading ἔσωθεν καὶ ἔξωθεν is strongly supported, but the reading given above best explains the several variants.

κατασφραγιζω seal
 σφραγίς, ιδος f seal, mark
 ἑπτὰ seven

"Filled to overflowing and sealed with seven seals to insure [sic] the secrecy of its decrees, it contains the full account of what God in his sovereign will has determined as the destiny of the world." Mounce. Cf. Ps 139:16. In particular, it contains God's plan for the establishment of his kingdom – the purpose of history.

Witherington thinks that there is an allusion to Ezek 2:9,10 and that the scroll is a scroll of judgments.

Verse 2

καὶ εἶδον ἄγγελον ἰσχυρὸν κηρύσσοντα ἐν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ, Τίς ἄξιός ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον καὶ λῦσαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ; ἰσχυρός, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful
 κηρυσσω preach, proclaim
 μέγας, μεγάλη, μέγα large, great
 ἄξιός, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
 ἀνοίγω open
 λυω loose, release

Who is capable of effecting the purposes of God – able to establish his kingdom?

Verse 3

καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς οὐδὲ ὑποκάτω τῆς γῆς ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό. οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμα, οὐδεν no one, nothing
 δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
 οὐρανός, ου m heaven
 γῆ, γῆς f earth, land
 ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath

"The tripartite division of the universe (heaven, earth, under the earth) is also found in Philippians 2:10 – incidentally in a scene of universal adoration of Christ – and probably stems from the second commandment which forbids making any likeness of that which is in 'heaven above, or ... in the earth beneath, or ... in the waters under the earth' (Ex 20:4). As used here it stresses the universality of the proclamation rather than some particular cosmology." Mounce.

οὔτε not, nor, neither
 βλέπω see, look, be able to see

I.e. look into it, read its contents.

Verse 4

καὶ ἔκλαιον πολὺ ὅτι οὐδεὶς ἄξιός εὐρέθη ἀνοῖξαι τὸ βιβλίον οὔτε βλέπειν αὐτό.

Many MSS read καὶ ἐγώ. A majority of the UBS committee considered that ἐγώ was added by copyists to identify the subject of the otherwise ambiguous ἔκλαιον.

κλαίω weep, cry
 πολὺ much, greatly
 εὐρέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s εὐρίσκω
 find

It would mean that the promise of 4:1 will remain unfulfilled.

Verse 5

καὶ εἷς ἐκ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων λέγει μοι, Μὴ
 κλαῖε· ἰδοὺ ἐνίκησεν ὁ λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς
 φυλῆς Ἰούδα, ἡ ῥίζα Δαβὶδ, ἀνοῖξαι τὸ
 βιβλίον καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ.

Preston and Hanson consider this, together with the next verse, among the most profound in the entire book in that "they relate Jewish Messianic hopes to the distinctively Christian good news of the advent of the Messiah in the person of Jesus of Nazareth."

εἷς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
 πρεσβυτερος, α, ον see 4:10
 νικαω conquer, overcome, win the
 verdict

λεων, οντος m lion
 φυλη, ης f tribe

Cf. Gen 49:9-10.

ῥιζα, ης f root, source

Cf. Is 11:1.

"John is to cease weeping, for Christ has conquered once and for all. Paradoxically, this decisive victory over Satan and death was accomplished on the cross. He conquered by an act of total self-sacrifice. The result is that he alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny both to reveal and to carry out the final dissolution of all forces set in opposition to the eternal kingdom of God." Mounce.