

## Third Scene: Transfer of the Scroll to the Lamb (v.6)

**VERSE 6 And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the****elders a Lamb standing** (Καὶ εἶδον ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ θρόνου καὶ τῶν τεσσάρων ζώων καὶ ἐνμέσῳ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀρνίου ἐστηκός [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.1s. eidon see + prep en +**adj.loc.nt.s. mesos middle; “between” + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thronos throne + conj kai +**art.w/adj.gen.nt.p. tessares four + noun gen.nt.p. zoon living being + conj kai + prep en +**art.w/adj./noun gen.m.p. presbuteros elder + noun nom.nt.s. arnion lamb, sheep +**perf.act.part.nom.nt.s. histemi stand; appoint], as if slain, having seven horns and seven***eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth** [ἔχων κέρατα

ἑπτὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὺς ἑπτὰ οἳ εἰσιν τὰ [ἑπτὰ] πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεσταλμένοι εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν

γῆν [*conj hos as + perf.pass.part.nom.nt.s. sphazo slay, slaughter; of animals +**pres.act.part.nom.m.s. echo have + noun acc.nt.p. keras horn + adj.acc.nt.p. hepta seven + conj**kai + noun acc.m.p. ophthalmos eye + adj.acc.m.p. hepta seven + pro.nom.m.p. hos which +**pres.act.ind.3p. eimi be + art.w/adj.nom.nt.p. hepta seven + noun nom.nt.p. pneuma spirit +**art.w/noun gen.m.s. theos God + perf.pass.part.nom.m.p. apostello send, commission + prep eis**into + adj.acc.f.s. pas all + art.w/noun acc.f.s. ge earth]).***ANALYSIS: VERSE 6**

1. The third scene of this chapter introduces the main character in the heavenly drama.
2. He is seen by John as taking the scroll of judgment/destiny from the One sitting upon the throne, and the living creatures and the elders response by paying tribute to Him.
3. Verse 6 describes His position and appearance.
4. A correct understanding of the Lamb's position depends upon the connotation of the two *en messo* (“between” or “in the midst”) phrases which occur in the Greek text of this verse (NAS only translates one of these phrases [“between”]; the second occurs just before “the elders”).
5. One view sees the Lamb standing somewhere between the inner concentric circle of the living creatures and the outer concentric circle of the 24 elders.
6. Placing Him some distance from the throne could explain His need to come forward (cf. v.7) to receive the scroll from the One sitting upon the throne.
7. This sense would agree with the Semitic idiom as illustrated in Lev.27:12, 14 of the LXX.
8. This kind of Hebraism is widely illustrated in the Greek OT (e.g., Gen. 1:4, 7, 18; 2:7; 3:15; 9:16, 17).
9. Another view sees the Lamb standing in the center of all the beings, both living creatures and elders, who surround the throne.
10. This is the force of the same phrase in Rev.4:6.
11. It also agrees with the general place of the Lamb throughout the book.
12. He is the centerpiece of all.
13. Furthermore, it concurs with Rev. 7:17, which so locates the Lamb (cf. Rev. 3:21).

14. This view takes the two “in the midst” phrases in parallel with each other, which emphasizes that the Lamb stood in the center of all the beings named.
15. This view admittedly cannot answer why it was necessary for the Lamb to come forward in order to take the scroll (v.7).
16. Yet the suggestion that places Him on the outer periphery temporarily, before approaching the throne runs counter to Rev. 3:21 (cf. Acts 7:56; Heb. 10:12).
17. Hence, the “coming” of v.7 must depict merely His movement from beside the Father to a position where He could receive the scroll.
18. After describing the position of the leading character, John supplies details of His appearance.
19. He calls Him a lamb.
20. The Greek noun *arnion* will be used frequently in the remainder of the book of Revelation, becoming almost a semi-technical term to describe the crucified Messiah.
21. Elsewhere in the NT it occurs only at Jn. 21:15, but in the LXX it occurs 4x.
22. In formation, the word is a diminutive of *aren* (“lamb”), but the diminutive should not be pressed here to mean “little lamb” any more than the diminutive of *therion* (“beast”) should be pressed to mean “little beast” to which the two diminutives are set in opposition later in the book.
23. The choice of the diminutive here is probably intended to enhance the contrast between the lamb and the lion, both of which are descriptive aspects of Christ’s Person (cf. 5:5).
24. He combines the meekness and gentleness of a lamb with the majesty of a lion as well as with the horns of power yet to be named in v.6.
25. Some reject this interpretation and prefer the translation “ram” for the word.
26. But elsewhere in Jewish Greek usage, the term only means “lamb” or “little lamb.”
27. It is Christ’s death as a sacrificial lamb with its redemptive results that qualifies Him, and Him alone, to open the scroll.
28. The next part confirms this conclusion: “standing, as if slain.”
29. A slain lamb is perfectly appropriate to the intended paradox.
30. On the one hand, the elder has described the Person as the lion of the tribe of Judah (5:5), depicting supreme power.
31. On the other, His appearance is that of “a lamb standing as having been slain,” (literal transl.) which speaks of self-sacrifice.
32. These figures (appropriate to and acceptable to visionary license) draw attention to the unique characteristics that adhere to the God-Man in His incarnate and glorified history.
33. His supreme self-sacrifice leads to His supreme power and dominion.
34. The lamb-aspect was accomplished in His first advent the lion-aspect is manifest in His glorification and 2<sup>nd</sup> advent.
35. The participle “standing” portrays the Lamb as standing in its normal position.
36. He is not dead.
37. Even though slain, He is erect and alive in this heavenly scene.
38. To be sure, the marks of His death are visible, but because of His resurrection, they are not debilitating.
39. We are not told how the slaying of the Lamb was made apparent to John, only that He “had been slain.”
40. The other participle “one slain” depicts His historical sacrifice.

41. Subsequent information will show it to be *the* accomplishment that qualifies Him to open the scroll of destiny (cf. 5:9).
42. The sacrificial note is predominant in the use of the participle *sphazo* as seen in the LXX.
43. The use of “lamb” in v.6 lends itself to the emphasis as does the reference to redemption in 5:9.
44. In a book so filled with Exodus-style terminology in Revelation, a reference to the Passover lamb is to be expected.
45. This conclusion is confirmed by the attention to the Passover lamb in the gospel of John as well (cf. Jn.1:29; 19:14, 31-36).
46. The objection to this identification of the verb *sphago* (“slain”) is that this verb is never used outside Revelation in connection with Christ’s sacrificial death can be answered by noting the presence of its cognate noun as part of the sacrificial terminology in the LXX rendering of Isa. 53:7.
47. The further objection that a slain sacrificial lamb would have a throat wound, rather than those in the hands, feet and on the side as Christ’s were presses the details of the similarity excessively.
48. The general point is that the death wounds on the body still remain, however they might have been manifest on the lamb of John’s vision.
49. A further feature of the Lamb’s appearance comes in the phrase “having seven horns and seven eyes.”
50. In the OT the horn is a symbol of strength or power.
51. As a Hebrew metaphor, it occurs in Num. 23:22 and Deut. 33:17 (cf. also 1Sam.2:1; 2Sam.22:3; 1Kgs. 22:11; Pss. 75:4; 132:17; Dan. 7:20-21; 8:5).
52. In the later books of the OT it symbolizes political force or kingly dignity and is thus used in the Apocalypse several times (Rev. 12:3; 13:1; 17:3, 12).
53. The horns are seven in number, indicating the fullness of Christ’s power, because seven is the number indicating perfection.
54. The Lamb with seven horns is, then, all-powerful as warrior and king.
55. The Lamb’s seven eyes are symbolic of Christ’s omniscience.
56. Perfect judgment is based on perfect intelligence or information.
57. This recalls Zechariah’s emphasis upon the eyes of the Lord that range to and fro throughout the earth.
58. Nothing escapes the notice of this lamb.
59. Not only is He omnipotent, as indicated by His seven horns, He is also omniscient.
60. Christ’s omniscience is further reinforced (as if it needed to be) as seen in the relative clause “which are the seven spirits of God sent into all the earth.”
61. This symbolic representation of God the Holy Spirit arises from the relationship of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Person of the Trinity to the second Person.
62. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son just as He does from the 1<sup>st</sup> Person (cf. Jn. 15:26).
63. This proceeding forth in theology is called eternal procession.
64. The Holy Spirit is Christ’s agent for keeping in touch with the affairs of the world, as the participial phrase “sent out into all the earth” indicates.
65. “I send” is a keyword in the gospel of John (e.g., Jn. 20:21, 22), means to send in an official capacity.
66. Because “sent” agrees in gender with “eyes”, it is sometimes taken to mean that the eyes have been sent out into all the earth.

67. Zech. 4:10, the OT source of this figure, favors this.
68. Yet the present usage supports so strongly the sending forth of the seven spirits as agents of divine providence that it is better to take the words in a slightly different sense from that in Zechariah.
69. So the participial agreement with its antecedent is according to sense rather than strictly grammatical.
70. The Holy Spirit is Christ's agent for assimilating what is going on throughout the whole world, and this relationship is represented symbolically in the imposing picture of the Lamb in the throne room.

#### Transfer of the Scroll (v.7)

**VERSE 7 And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne** (καὶ ἦλθεν καὶ εἴληφεν ἐκ τῆς δεξιᾶς τοῦ καθημένου ἐπὶ τοῦ θρόνου [*conj kai + aor.act.ind.3s. erchomai come + conj kai + perf.act.ind.3s. lambano receive, take hold + prep ek + adj.abl.f.s. dezios right + art.w/pres.dep.part.gen.m.s. kathemai sit + prep epi + art.w/noun gen.m.s. thronos throne*]).

#### ANALYSIS: VERSE 7

1. After describing the Lamb's position and appearance, John records the transfer of the scroll from the Father to the Lamb.
2. After describing the Lamb's position and appearance, John records the transfer of the scroll from the Father to the Lamb.
3. Since the Lamb is already seated beside the Father on the throne it is only necessary that He position Himself to accept the scroll from the Father.
4. Such a presentation is all that is required by "He came."
5. By permitting the Lamb to take the scroll, the One sitting upon the throne authorizes Him in a symbolic fashion to execute the Father's plan for the redemption of the universe/world.
6. The Lamb and only the Lamb is qualified to do this because of His work on the cross toward sin.
7. A question arises about how a lamb, an animal which has no hands, could take something from the hand of the one on the throne.
8. One answer resorts to the principle that scriptural symbols are not always capable of visual or artistic representation.
9. A preferable explanation is to postulate that at this point the Lamb may have resumed human form.
10. He must do so at some point to enable Him to break the seals on the scroll (cf. 6:1,3,5,7,9,12; 8:1).
11. Possibly this transformation occurred here, though the text does not mention it, enabling Him to take the scroll from the Father.
12. His acceptance of the book is expressed by a perfect tense of the verb *lambano* ("I take").
13. This perfect is an intensive perfect denoting the permanent results associated with Christ's receipt of the scroll.
14. He receives the scroll of judgment as an abiding possession (cf. Rev.3:3).
15. What occurs here is a dramatic description of a transaction that affects the future course of history.

## Response of the Living Beings and Elders (v.8)

**VERSE 8 When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-**

**four elders fell down before the Lamb** (καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβεν τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἴκοσι τέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσαν ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου [*conj kai + adv hote when + aor.act.ind.3s. lambano receive + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. biblion scroll + art.w/adj.nom.nt.p. tessares four + noun nom.nt.p. zoon being + conj kai + art.w/adj.nom.m.p. eikosi twenty + adj.nom.m.p. tessares four + noun nom.m.p. presbuteros elder + aor.act.ind.3p. pipto fall + prep enopion before + art.w/noun gen.nt.p. arnion lamb*], **each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints** [ἔχοντες ἕκαστος κιθάραν καὶ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, αἱ εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων [*pres.act.part.nom.m.p. echo have; “holding” + adj.nom.m.s. hekastos each + noun acc.f.s. kithara harp, lyre + conj kai + noun acc.f.p. phiale bowl, shallow cup (a vessel broad and flat in shape) + adj.acc.f.s. chrusous golden + pres.act.part.f.p. gemo be full + noun gent.nt.p. thumiama incense; as in “the altar of incense” of Lk.1;11 + pro.nom.f.p. hos; “which” + pres.act.ind.3p. eimi are + art.w/noun nom.f.p. prosueche prayer + art.w/adj.gen.m.p. hagios saint*]).

**ANALYSIS: VERSE 8**

1. With the handing of the scroll to the Lamb we encounter one of the greatest scenes of adoration anywhere recorded (cf. v.11).
2. The initial responders include the four living beings (angelic) and the twenty four elders.
3. The thrill of satisfaction over the Lamb’s unique worthiness to receive the scroll that authorizes its possessor to consummate ‘operation footstool’ illicit worship from the two groups intimate with the throne.
4. When the Lamb takes the book, the four living creatures and the twenty four elders fell before the throne of majesty in adoration.
5. His taking of the scroll marks the initiation of the proceedings to bring its contents to fruition with the ultimate result of ushering in the long promised kingdom.
6. A further expression expands upon the way the 24 elders express their worship.
7. The words “each having a harp and golden bowls full of incense” apply to the elders alone.
8. The fact is that the details of this description are not appropriate to the living beings.
9. To attribute to angels priestly functions ignores the priestly function that is distinctive to the elders.
10. The 24 elders are 24 distinguished pastor-teachers who now appear in John’s vision clothed in white priestly attire, crowned with the golden wreaths, associated with a completed course, and now, possessing harps and golden bowls of incense, which items are associated with the priests of the age of Israel.
11. The number 24 is significant as its echoes the 24 orders of the Levitical priesthood of old.

12. The musical instrument of the elders is the traditional one associated with the music in the Temple in the OT.
13. It, like the lyre, is associated with joy and gladness (cf. 1Chron.25:1,6; 2Chron.29:25; Pss. 71:22; 92:3; 149:3).
14. More than any other musical instrument, the harp is employed in Scripture in direct praise and worship of God.
15. The other vehicle of worship employed by the elders is “golden bowls.”
16. The vessel referred to here was used for offering incense and was a container with a large opening.
17. The English word bowl or saucer best represents the present term.
18. Golden bowls were the kinds of vessels that belonged to the OT altar (cf. Zech.14:20).
19. The LXX uses *phiale* frequently to name vessels found in the Tabernacle and the Temple (e.g., Ex.27:3; Num.4:14; 2Chron.4:21).
20. The bowls were full of incense.
21. The fragrant odor released when the incense was offered on the golden altar with its coals of fire symbolized effectual prayer before the throne of God.
22. The altar of incense was positioned in from the veil separating the holy place from the most holy place.
23. The most holy place held the Ark of the Covenant with its golden lid which symbolizes God’s throne.
24. In OT worship the offering of incense was the prerogative of the priests (Num.16:6,7).
25. A relative clause serves to identify the symbolism of “incense”.
26. Though the gender of the relative pronoun “which” agrees with “bowls,” it has “incense” as its antecedent.
27. This is the natural sense as dictated by the context.
28. The feminine gender of the pronoun “which” is explained by its attraction to the gender of the predicate nominative of the relative clause “the prayers.”
29. Prayers of the saints are elsewhere symbolized in this fashion (cf. Ps.141:2).
30. The fragrant smoke of incense ascending from a worshiper or an altar was cited widely in ancient times as a natural portrayal of prayer ascending from earth to heaven.
31. The elders’ possession of the incense and the identification of the incense as the prayers of the saints probably relate these prayers to the believers of the church age.
32. The prayer content symbolized by the incense is the many petitions to bring in the promised kingdom as expressed in the model prayer (i.e., “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”).
33. This aspect of prayer is seen in Lk. 18:7-8.
34. For the connection of similar prayers with the vindication of the tribulational martyrs see Rev. 8:3-5.
35. The reference to the coming reign of the saints in 5:10 further supports this identification of the prayer content symbolized here by the incense held by the 24 elders in the golden bowls.
36. In 6:10, the martyrs petition God for judgment against their murders.
37. The saints or holy ones are those believers down through the ages who have prayed for the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven on earth.
38. At this juncture all these saints are now in heaven.
39. OT saints still exist in the intermediate state, while church age saints are present in their resurrection bodies.

40. Tribulational saints are added to their number over the course of the tribulation.
41. Some interpreters restrict the symbolism of the incense to the prayers of the tribulational martyrs who have special cause for vindication while the seven-year tribulation is in progress.
42. The Apocalypse describes a witnessing company of saints on earth during the period of apocalyptic wrath (cf. 12:17; 13:7-10) who are the objects of the beast's persecution.
43. However, it seems best to identify the incense in the golden bowls of the elders as representing the prayers of the saints through the ages which are on the verge of being answered.
44. These prayers are preparatory to the opening of the seven seals as the period begins.

### The New Song (vv. 9-10)

**VERSE 9 And they sang a new song, saying** (καὶ ᾄδουσιν ὄδῃν καινὴν λέγοντες [*conj kai + pres.act.ind.3p. ado sing + noun acc.f.s. ode song + adj.acc.f.s. kainos new (of what was not before) + pres.act.part.nom.m.p. lego say*]), "**Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals** [*Ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ [adj.nom.m.s. axios worthy + pres.act.ind.2s. eimi + aor.act.infin. lambano receive, take + art.w/noun acc.nt.s. biblion book, scroll + conj kai + aor.act.infin. anoigo open; "break" + art.w/noun acc.f.p. sphragis seal + pro.gen.nt.s. autos "its"]*]; **for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation** [*conj hoti for + aor.pass.ind.2s. sphazo slay + conj kai + aor.act.ind.2s. agorazo purchase + art.w/noun dat.m.s. theos God + prep en + art.w/noun loc.nt.s. haima blood + pro.gen.s. su your + prep ek from + adj.abl.f.s. pas all, every + noun abl.f.s. phule tribe + conj kai + noun abl.f.s. glossa tongue, language + conj kai + noun abl.m.s. laos people + conj kai + noun abl.m.s. ethnos nation*]).

**VERSE 10 " You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth** (*conj kai + aor.act.ind.2s. poieo make, do + pro.acc.m.p. autos "them" + art.w/noun dat.m.s. theos God + pro.gen.p. ego "our" + noun acc.f.s. basileia kingdom + conj kai + noun acc.m.p. hiereus priest + conj kai + fut.act.ind.3p. basileuo kingdom + prep epi upon + art.w/gen.f.s. ge earth*))."

### ANALYSIS: VERSES 9-10

1. The song promoted by the transfer to the scroll to the Lamb is enlightening.
2. The first part of the song celebrates the worthiness of the Lamb to implement its contents.
3. Before discussing the song itself, one must identify those who do the singing.
4. The plural subject of the verb "they sang" could be the twenty-four elders, or it could include both the elders and the four living beings.

5. Limiting its contents to the elders only has in its favor the limitation of the “having” phrase of v. 8 to the elders alone.
6. They are the ones having the musical instruments.
7. Obviously, the living beings do not need musical instruments in order to sing.
8. Another factor favoring the elders as the singers is the words “our God” which is paralleled in the paean of praise by the elders in 4:11.
9. The mantra of the living beings given in 4:8b does not refer to God employing the pronoun “our.”
10. It probably is inappropriate for the living beings to celebrate royalty and priesthood as personalized in v.10.
11. The celebration of a special status made possible by the sacrifice of the Lamb is a blessing conferred upon humans not angels.
12. And it is humans, specifically glorified representatives of the Royal Priesthood of the CA, which sing this song upon the Lamb receiving the “scroll of destiny.”
13. The “new song” sung by the 24 elders is composed specifically for a new era made possible by the implementation of the judgments associated with the breaking of the seven seals.
14. A song thus named “new” is mentioned seven times (Pss. 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Isa.42:10; cp. Rev.5:9; 14:3).
15. “New” (*kainos*) in this book signifies something that has entered a new stage, calling for a new celebration.
16. It denotes the quality of a thing, not new in reference to time.
17. The temporal connotation would have been conveyed by *neos* (“new”).
18. This is the description of a song that is new in nature, different from the unusual, impressive, better than the old, and superior in value.
19. The opening word of the song, “worthy” celebrates the worthiness of the Lamb to receive the scroll and open its seals (cf. 5:4-5).
20. It is significant that here Christ is addressed as worthy in the same manner as the Father was in 4:11.
21. He who takes the scroll and puts its contents into effect exercises the divine prerogative of judgment and sovereignty.
22. The reason for the Lamb’s declared worthiness is expressed in a twofold manner: “because You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation (1<sup>st</sup> part).”
23. The second reason for the Lamb’s worthiness is seen in v.10.
24. This deals with the purchase price of redemption and validates the ascription of worthiness given.
25. The aorist indicatives “You were slain” and “You have purchased/redeemed” look back to Christ’s work on the cross with respect to sin.
26. The former verb (“were slain”) also describes the death of Christ in verses 6 and 12 of this chapter as well as in Rev. 13:8.
27. In Rev. 6:9 and 18:24 it is used in connection with martyrs.
28. The second verb (“purchased”) points to the result achieved by the death of Christ, namely the redemption of humans.
29. The purchase price is here specified as the “blood” of Christ.
30. Paul and Peter also view Ph 1 salvation as a matter of purchase (cf. 1Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 1Pet. 1:18-19; 2Pet. 2:1).

31. The isagogical background of the verb “purchased” is the slave market.
32. Believers are members of the human race who have been set free from the wages of sin and death.
33. This redemption is from *all* hostile power.
34. This interpretation of the verb “purchased” is further supported by the Passover lamb that was sacrificed so that Israel could be released from Egyptian bondage.
35. The sacrifice of a lamb in each household symbolized forgiveness of Israel’s sins and commemorated the race’s deliverance from Egyptian bondage.
36. The Person for whose benefit the purchase was made in none other than God Himself, as “for God” indicates.
37. Those purchased as His special possession.
38. The redeemed ones come from every part of the human race.
39. Here the objects of redemption are limited to those who are the actual beneficiaries of Christ’s death.
40. While Christ died for all humanity (1Jn. 2:2), only those who believe in His name are “purchased” or “redeemed.”
41. The purchase price of Ph1 salvation was made on behalf of all humanity but the blessings associated with that redemption is limited to those who believe on His name.
42. Those who remain in the slave market of sin do so of their own volition.
43. The four terms “every tribe and tongue and people and nation” occur five times in Revelation (cf. 7:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6), but never in the same order as here.
44. The origin of the description is the book of Daniel (cf. Dan. 3:4,7,29; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14).
45. The enumeration includes representatives of every nationality, without distinction of race, geographical location, language or political persuasion.
46. “Tribe” denotes the idea of genealogical descent.
47. It is a group belonging to the same clan and united by family lineage.
48. People speaking the same language are intended by “tongue” (cf. Acts 2:4,6,8,11).
49. “People” denotes the same race or stock.
50. The group indicated by “nation” is one bound together by political unity or perhaps more broadly by habits, customs and peculiarities.
51. People of every lineage, language, race and political persuasion are represented in the broad company of the beneficiaries of Christ’s redemption.
52. In the present context the beneficiaries of redemption is limited to church age believers as verse 10 makes clear.
53. The second part of the twofold reason for the ascription of worthiness to the Lamb comes in a sketch of benefits accruing to the redeemed “and You have made them *to be* a kingdom of priests to our God; and they will reign on the earth.”
54. The 24 elders go on to sing of Lamb’s sacrifice in terms of the establishment of a universal kingdom of royal priests destined to rule and reign with the Lamb upon this earth.
55. The threefold occurrence of this theme in Revelation (cf. also 1:6; 20:6) indicates that the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers was common parlance among 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians.
56. As God’s possession, the redeemed will not merely be people over whom He reigns, but will also share in God’s rule in the coming millennial kingdom (cf. 1Cor.4:8; 6:3).
57. This kingdom is the goal toward which the plan of God is moving as emphasized by “and they will reign.”

58. Believers are currently viewed in Scripture as a royal priesthood (1Pet. 2:5,9).
59. The royal priesthood of the Church carries over into Ph3 unlike the Aaronic priesthood of old (cf. Heb. 7:23 “The *former* priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers because they were prevented by death from continuing, but Jesus, on the other hand, because He continues forever, holds His priesthood.”).
60. The universal priesthood of the royal family is patterned after the priesthood of Jesus Christ which is patterned after the priesthood of Melchizedek (cf. Heb. 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:17).
61. Via positional sanctification church age believers share the priesthood of Christ.
62. It is fitting that the 24 elders would celebrate in song the glorious fact of their priesthood and its benefits being glorified representatives of that priesthood.
63. Furthermore, as the song concludes, this priesthood is destined to “reign upon the earth.”
64. This represents the apex of the manifestation of this priesthood.
65. We are destined to reign upon the earth as opposed to heaven.
66. The first phase of this co-rulership with Christ is the millennial kingdom.
67. The final phase of this rulership is the eternal state (cf. Rev. 22:5).