

Biblical Investigations

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The 24 Elders of Revelation

A Biblical Exposition on Revelation 5:8 - 10

KJV Revelation 5:8-10:

⁸ And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

SCR Revelation 5:9-10:

⁸ καὶ ὅτε ἔλαβε τὸ βιβλίον, τὰ τέσσαρα ζῶα καὶ οἱ εἴκοσιτέσσαρες πρεσβύτεροι ἔπεσον ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου, ἔχοντες ἕκαστος κιθάρας, καὶ φιάλας χρυσᾶς γεμούσας θυμιαμάτων, αἳ εἰσιν αἱ προσευχαὶ τῶν ἁγίων.

⁹ καὶ ᾄδουσιν ᾠδὴν καινὴν, λέγοντες, Ἄξιός ἐστι λαβεῖν τὸ βιβλίον, καὶ ἀνοῖξαι τὰς σφραγίδας αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἐσφάγης, καὶ ἠγόρασας τῷ Θεῷ ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ αἵματί σου ἐκ πάσης φυλῆς καὶ γλώσσης καὶ λαοῦ καὶ ἔθνους,

¹⁰ καὶ ἐποίησας ἡμᾶς τῷ Θεῷ ἡμῶν βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς, καὶ βασιλεύσομεν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

It has been propose that the reading of the above passage in the KJV is *inaccurate* and that the KJV translators *inserted* into the Bible words that are not in the original text. After injecting this idea into the minds of people an argument is then begun which seeks to establish that the 24 Elders are *not human beings* as the KJV text teaches but rather that they are “representatives from other worlds,” that is they are “the sons of God” that are mentioned in Job 1 and 2.

The above Greek text of Revelation 5:9-10 clearly shows that the KJV translators correctly translated the Greek into English; ἡμᾶς is properly translated as “us,” a personal pronoun accusative plural of the singular form ἐγὼ “I.” The Greek word for “them” is “αὐτούς” and this is just not in the Greek text from which the KJV was translated.

The accusation that the King James translators inserted into the English words that were not there in the Greek is inappropriate and just not true. This kind of erroneous rational has lead to the erroneous

conclusion that the 24 Elders are singing about someone else's experience and not their own.

The song that is sung by the 24 Elders is either one or the other;

KJV - "for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

OR

NIV- "because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

The 24 Elders cannot sing both versions of the song, for they are both different. In the first song the 24 Elders are singing about their own personal experience. But in the second, they are singing about someone else's experience.

If we accept the KJV as a valid translation of what was shown to John by Jesus, then the plain reading of the text shows that those who sing this new song are redeemed by the blood of Christ, they are human beings from earth, and one day they will, with Christ, reign on the earth. The text also shows that those who sing this new song are human beings because they were made kings and priests by Christ;

Revelation 1:5-6

⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

⁶ And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:9-10

⁹ And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Revelation 1:5-6 supports the accuracy of the KJV translation of Revelation 5:9-10 by virtue of the almost identical wording. Both say that it is Jesus Christ Who by His blood has redeemed "us" from "our" sins and therefore made "us" kings and priests.

The theme of Revelation focuses on the relationship between Christ and those whom He has redeemed. This is demonstrated by often use of writing in the first person plural. John does not say that God has redeemed me but rather You have redeemed us. John does not say "He has redeemed them" putting himself out of the picture and at a distance. He speaks as if he is right there speaking directly to Christ about what He has done for all of us, including you and me. John includes himself by the use of the first

person plural. This also allows for anyone who would ever read what he wrote to also be personally included with all the rest of the redeemed. This literary device is used by John only when speaking of the redeemed but when speaking of the wicked John never includes himself. John does not say “*we* were cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone” but that “*they* were cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.”

When John speaks of the redeemed he always included himself by the use of words that are in the first person plural. Only when speaking of other groups; the unredeemed, the devils and his angels, or even sinless angels, Jesus and the Father, does John describe them using the third person plural, thus *not* including himself or the reader.

Thus, the literary form in which John writes makes it seem as though John is writing *directly to us*, or *directly to the one who is reading what he wrote*. So, to those who would read what John wrote *by the very manner in which John wrote*, John seems to be writing personally to them with the intent and hope that they would choose to be among the redeemed. John is writing *evangelistically* or with the hope and intent that his readers accept the gospel of Christ, repent and be saved. Thus he writes in such a way to be sure and leave room for them to be included with himself with the redeemed.

But regarding the wicked John’s literary style excludes them from himself and the redeemed. He writes in such a way when speaking of the wicked, that puts them off from God, that separates them from Christ and His holy angels and from heaven and the redeemed, and groups them with the lost or Satan and his evil angels.

So, from the plain reading of Revelation 1:5-6 along with 5:8-10 (KJV) it should be obvious that these passages can only apply to human beings who come from earth. If we use “*them*” in one passage why not use it in the other, when both are speaking of the same identical subject; those who are made kings and priests? To do so seems odd and out of place with the overall theme and writing style of John.

Thus, the KJV makes is very clear that the 24 Elders are human beings. There is no other choice. The idea that they are “representatives from other worlds” is impossible to support from the KJV Bible. The only way around this is to delete the reading of the KJV and insert something else.

The reading of the NIV (and other versions) on the other hand allows for an understanding that those who sing the new song *are not necessarily human beings*, because they *are not* singing that they themselves are the ones who have been redeemed from the earth, but rather that the Lamb has redeemed “*them*”-someone else who are only identified as “*them*,” and who are not named anywhere in the whole chapter. But *by the very use of the word “them” requires* that this group to have been previously introduced by the writer.

The out come is really determined by which Bible translation one wishes to use. So, if I want to believe one way or the other I simple can choose the version that fits with my personal preference of my own theology. This type of religion building does not allow the Bible to be the foundation, basis, and test of all religious doctrine and experience. The individual person themselves becomes the final authority in matters of religious faith and thus they are no submissive to the authority of God’s word. They selectively pick and choose what they want to believe. Seventh-day Adventists, while being taught to prove all things for themselves from the word of God, have not been taught to adopt such philosophy or method of building their religious faith.

The theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church was built upon the KJV Bible (including the Greek NT text-*The Received Text/Textus Receptus* of the Protestant Reformation). The development of Seventh-day Adventist theology began with the principles of Bible interpretation that were used by early first-day Adventists around the 1830's and continued down through the early 1860's when the church was officially organized, all of which we taken from the KJV. From here the development of the church's theology and doctrine continued to be based upon the KJV. There were no other versions to choose from as there are today. So then, for some 55 years the Church used the KJV to build her doctrines, and every member when reading Revelation 5:8-10 understood that the Bible taught that the 24 Elders were human beings redeemed from the earth. They would not for a moment entertained the idea that they could be representatives from other world or the "sons of God" from the Divine council, and this inspire of what Ellen White would write in *Desire of Ages*, pp. 833-834 (which we will examine later herein below).

It was not until 1885 that a new version of the Bible was published, the Revised Version. But even after this new translation of the Bible appeared the Church did not abandon the KJV for the reading of the newer version. At times the RV was quoted from, even by Ellen White, but what is interesting is that every single time she quotes Revelation 5:9-10 she used the KJV. Here are a few examples;

The law of God, which so many cannot bear to hear, is the proclamation of his pure and holy character. It was because God loved mankind that he gave men his holy precepts. They are a testimony of his character, and are holy, just, and good. They bring a good report of God to the world, by presenting his holy character to mankind. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." Shall we not be able to persuade the silent lips and voices to sing his praises? The time will come when all will praise him. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, *and hast redeemed us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; *and hast made us* unto our God kings and priests. . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." O let us begin to sing the songs of heaven here, and then we can join the heavenly company above. {RH, June 4, 1895 par. 6}

Please notice the date; 1895. This is 10 years after the RV was published. Why didn't she choose the newer reading which she quoted from in other instances? Please also note that she understood that the time would come when the "world" that is "mankind" would be the ones to sing the new song of Revelation 5:9-10. But how could this be if the truth is that only the 4 beasts and the "representatives from other world" sing this new song?

There is no where else in Revelation where the redeemed are said to sing the song of redemption or even join the beast and the elders in singing "a new song." It seems quite odd and out of place that the 4 beasts and 24 elders/representatives of other worlds would sing a new song, and that the 144,000 would sing a new song, but the great multitude of redeemed sing no song at all, no "new song."

The theme of the "new song" in the Bible from the song of Moses, to the Psalms, to Revelation is a song of redemption. It seems incongruent with the rest of the new songs in the Bible that there would be a great multitude of the redeemed who never sing redemption's song-the new song. It make the Bible harmonize with itself when we adopt the reading of the KJV in Revelation 5:8-10 which makes those who sing this "new song" actually the ones who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and not some other group who have had no experience in Redemption's Story singing in place of those who should be doing the singing!

Christ delights to take apparently hopeless material, those whom Satan has debased and through whom he has worked, and make them

the subjects of his grace. He rejoices to deliver them from suffering, and from the wrath that is to fall upon the disobedient. He makes his children his agents in the accomplishment of this work; and in its success, even in this life, they find a precious reward. {RH, July 11, 1912 par. 11}

But what is this compared with the joy that will be theirs in the great day of final reckoning? There will be a blessed commendation, a holy benediction, on the faithful winner of souls; for they will join the rejoicing ones in heaven, who shout the harvest home. How great will be the joy when the redeemed shall all meet, gathered into the mansions prepared for them that love him! What rejoicing for all who have been impartial, unselfish laborers together with God in winning souls to Christ! What satisfaction will every reaper have when the voice of Jesus shall be heard, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." {RH, July 11, 1912 par. 12}

The Redeemer is glorified because he has not died in vain. Those who have been laborers together with God, see, as does Christ, the travail of their souls for perishing, dying sinners, and they are satisfied. The anxious hours they have spent, the perplexing circumstances they have had to meet, the sorrow of heart because some refuse to see and to receive the things that make for their peace,--all are forgotten. As they look upon the souls they sought to win to Christ, and see them saved, eternally saved, monuments of God's mercy and of a Redeemer's love, there ring through the arches of heaven shouts of praise and thanksgiving. {RH, July 11, 1912 par. 13}

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests. . . . Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing." {RH, July 11, 1912 par. 14}

Please not the date once again; 1912. This is now 27 years after the publishing of the RV. It is also 11 after the publishing of the ARV (American Revised Version 1901), which follow the reading of the RV. Still in 1912, just 3 years before she would take her final breath, she uses the KJV translation of Revelation 5:9-10. If there were really a problem with the reading of the KJV and its teaching that the 24 Elder are redeemed human beings wouldn't God have directed her in this matter to use the "more accurate" version?

In so many other instances God revealed to her problems with the misreading, misunderstanding, and even with the reading of translations. One specific issue was the use of the word "*sacrifice*" in the KJV is Daniel 8. She says it was not there in the original and that we should not use this word. The KJV italicized this word as an indicator that it was inserted by the translators to try and clarify the understanding of the passage (their understand that is). If there were really a problem of inserting the "*us*" into the original text of Revelation 5:9 why should she quote from it and never point this out?

These facts are enough in themselves to establish that there is nothing wrong or misleading about the KJV translation, specifically in Revelation 5:9-10, and that as Seventh-day Adventist we should have not any misgivings about the teaching of the KJV that the 24 Elders are indeed human beings redeemed from the earth.

So, then, the above historical record of the use the KJV reading of Revelation 5:8-10 by the church and Ellen White demonstrates that from the 1830's at least until 1912 (that 82 years!) this was the accepted translation of Bible truth-the 24 Elders were for all these years seen as human beings redeemed from the earth. There was the idea floating around that the elders could be angels but this was never adopted by the church.

And the idea that the elders were "beings from other world" was never even thought. It would have never even been considered a possibility because the church had accepted the reading of the KJV. This is a relatively a new interpretation that has been presented to Seventh-day Adventist in the last few years.

But, laying Ellen White's use of the KJV aside, and the historical precedence of the church's use of the

KJV reading of Revelation 5:8-10; how do we know which is the correct reading? That is, what Biblical evidence do we have as to which song do the elders sing? And does it really matter?

According to the original Greek from which the KJV was translated only the first song is correct. The second song is not translated from the same Greek text as the KJV. Again it is misleading to say the KJV translators inserted into the Bible words that were not there in the Greek.

The Greek text from which the NIV was translated is different from that of the KJV, and reads differently. It is interesting to note that the NIV reads “purchased men for God,” but in the Greek text from which the NIV is translated the Greek word for “men” is not there. This word has been inserted into the text by the translators with no italicized indicator to make this obvious. So, if we are going to fault the KJV translators by accusing them of inserting words not found in the original Greek into the text (but which really are there), then should we not fault the NIV translators as well?

The two different readings are based on two different Greek texts. The question we now have before us is whether the Greek text of the KJV, known as the *Textus Receptus*, is really reliable or not. This text has been used to translate the Protestant NT into English for almost 400 years. It was the Greek text upon which Protestantism was founded and built. It was the text of the Protestant church from the time of Luther (1534) down to the publishing of the KJV in 1611, and continued to be until 1881-1885 when for the first time in 270 years a revision of the KJV was begun. It was after this that a new version of the Bible was introduced, but it was now based on an entirely new Greek text (*Textus Criticus*). Until this time the Greek text and its variations, from which most modern versions are translated—Nestle-Aland or UBS were not yet in existence.

In 1881-1885 a new Greek text was introduced by Wescott and Hort in which they had made thousands of changes to the KJV, all based on the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Greek manuscripts. The KJV Revision Committee were initially only supposed to revise the outdated language or readings of the KJV, but instead of using the same Greek text from which the KJV had been translated Wescott and Hort secretly (unknown to the general public) introduced a new Greek NT the majority of readings which were taken from the “superior” manuscripts; the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus. The final English translation was not at all a revision of the KJV but rather an entirely new

The Vaticanus manuscript was found by a Catholic monk in the library at the Vatican and the Sinaiticus by a Catholic priest at a monastery at the base of Mount Sinai. These facts open the door to suspicion to their authenticity and trust-worthiness. From these two Greek manuscripts nearly every modern version had adopted their readings, the source of which is highly questionable as the best representative of the original reading the NT Bible writers had penned. I will not enter here the long debate over Greek NT manuscripts other than to say that the Greek underlying the KJV is trustworthy and reliable. If it was sufficient for the church from the time of the reformation until 1881, for 270 years, and the church did not become more corrupt but less, then we should not think that the KJV is a poor translation and should not be used for serious Bible study and the establishment of Christian doctrine.

The issue before us of whether the 24 Elders sing “redeemed us” or “redeemed them” can be settled by other information found in the Book of Revelation and the rest of the Bible. The evidence will show which reading/translation is the most accurate.

From reading the NIV it makes the 24 Elders sing about someone else's experience when they are the ones that are falling down before God's throne. Wouldn't seem more consistent with their act of worship (since they are doing the worshipping) if they were singing about their own experience than someone else's?

If these are indeed representatives from other worlds why would they be singing a new song about redemption having never been redeemed?

Also, it is obvious that the 24 Elders are *functioning in the role of priests* (thus they are called elders) since they have censers filled with the prayers of the saints, which is clearly a work of priestly intercession. There is so very little information given in the Bible about these "sons of God" who met in the council as "representatives from other worlds" (implied by the context), but they are never describes as or called "priests." If indeed these 24 Elders are representatives from other worlds as has been proposed, since when do the representatives from other worlds intercede as priests for humanity? Would that even make any sense? And, are the "sons of God," the representatives from other worlds ever referred too as "priests?" Can a priest be taken from any one else but men? Please note what the Bible teaches about who the priests are and what their role is;

^{KJV} Hebrews 5:1 ¶ For *every high priest taken from among men* is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

^{NIV} Hebrews 5:1 ¶ *Every high priest is selected from among men* and is appointed *to represent them in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*

Now, if the 24 Elders are indeed functioning as priests then they cannot be anything other than men. The fact that the 24 Elders have in their hands "censers" which are filled with "the prayers of the saints" makes it obvious as a train wreck that they are indeed priests. Every priest is "selected" from "among men." Men in the Bible are limited to earth, that is all men are from earth. Beings from other worlds are not men. If the 24 Elders are priests (and they are) then they can only be men from earth and thus they cannot be representatives from other worlds. This idea about them being "the sons of God" (Job 1 and 2) is eliminated as a possibility no matter which Greek text is used. Please also note that it is the priests who are "appointed to represent" men in "matters related to God" and to "offer" gifts and sacrifices in their behalf. Is this not what we see the 24 Elders doing in Revelation 5:8?

Some may object to this because it appears that the 4 beasts also have these censers. And so are they not priests as well? How can this be since the 4 beast are angels? If only "men" can be priests according to Hebrews 5:1 how can these beasts be priests? If we would not jump to conclusions so quickly and think through things more carefully we would avoid many an error. Please note the following.

The 4 beasts each have 6 wings. The Bible describes two kinds of angels; those with 4 wings and those with 6 wings. Those with 4 wings are called *Cherubim* and those with 6 wings are called *Seraphim*. Obviously the 4 beasts or "living creatures" are *Seraphim*, they are angels. These are the same angels we find in Isaiah 6:1-4 which are located at the throne of God. In Revelation 5:8-10 these *Seraphim* appear before God's throne (with the addition of the 24 Elders). The book of Hebrews also tells us that the angels are *ministering spirits* and so it is not out of place that they work closely with the priest *as intercessors* since it is the angels that serve as the communicating agents in offering and answering of the prayers of the saints, which is almost identical or a mirror of the work of the priests.

^{KJV} Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, *sent forth to minister for them* who shall be *heirs of salvation*?

Those who are to be the heirs of salvation are human beings. The angels of God are assigned by God to do a work of “*ministering*” for the saints. The angels are sent by God to “*minister*” to men. This is in perfect harmony with what is described as taking place in Revelation 5:8. Both the 4 beasts as well as the 24 Elders are doing a work of intercession before the throne of God for the saints on earth. But is there even the slightest hint in all the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy that the representatives from other worlds play such a role in ministering in behalf of the saints? NO! The representative from other worlds might do such a work for their own worlds which they represent (which we can only speculate about), but never for those on earth. There just is no Biblical evidence that the sons of God intercede for their own worlds nor for other worlds than their own.

The Representative of those on the earth is Christ, Whom Himself was ordained a Priest from among men to now represent us before God’s throne. Christ is now the Representative of earth not some other beings from other worlds. Why then should beings from other worlds intercede for those on earth when they have Christ to do this for them?

^{KJV} Hebrews 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

^{KJV} Hebrews 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

^{NIV} Hebrews 2:17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

^{NIV} Hebrews 2:18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Christ partook of the same flesh and blood that every other human being does (see verse 14) in order that He could face death and that He would be able to understand what it is like to have to be human. Therefore Christ could then understand what we have to go through and the temptations we have to face. This would enable Him to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, and know how to help those who are tempted.

It is only those who have faced the same things or gone through the same experiences as humanity has had to do who are able to truly minister and intercede in their behalf. This the representatives from other worlds have not done nor can they. Only fellow redeemed human beings from earth can fill such a ministry as priestly intercessors.

After understanding what the Bible teaches about the ministry of priests and of angels we can only conclude that the 24 Elders can only be human beings. This is even if we choose to use the reading of the modern translations which have the 24 Elders singing to the Lamb that He is worthy because it is He Who has redeemed “*them*” out of every “nation, kindred, tribe, and people.” It does not matter whether the 24

Elders sing “redeemed us” or “redeemed them” the simple fact that they are *elders* and *priests* alone *requires that they be human beings*. They cannot possibly be representatives from other worlds, neither could they be angels for the 4 living creatures already are the angels, and angels are never called “elders.” Once again the idea that the 24 Elders are representatives from other worlds is eliminated on this basis alone, no matter which Greek text is used.

If we take the reading of the some of the modern versions (based upon a different Greek than the KJV), that the 24 Elders sing “You have redeemed *them*,” suggesting that they are signing about someone else’s experience and not their own, then we are forced to explain the use of the word “*them*.”

When we use the word “*them*” in a sentence, it by necessity *requires* that those of whom we are now speaking have been at some previous point introduced into the context. We would never use “*them*” in a sentence that begins the first chapter in a book. The use of “*them*” refers us back to a previously introduce group. If we were to begin a book the normal way we would *name* the group first and then it would be proper English to use the term “*them*” in referring to that same group again. If we have not named the group then to use the term “*them*” is out of place. When using the term “them” we are always referring back to a previously named group; “boy,” “girls,” “men,” “women,” “elders” . . . etc.

We have in the context of Revelation 4 & 5 the following possibilities to whom “*them*” could be referring too; 1) the Father and the Lamb, 2) the 24 Elders, 3) the 4 Beasts, 4) the Saints.

The word “*them*” could not refer to the Lamb and His Father on the throne for they are the Ones who did the redeeming and not the objects of redemption. It cannot be referring to the 4 beast/angels because angels have not been redeemed from the earth.

If the 24 Elders are not signing about themselves as the ones who have been redeemed from the earth, then who else is left? The only ones in the throne room of God are the Father, the Lamb, the 4 Beasts, and the 24 Elders. There are no others present to whom the 24 Elders could be referring too! The use of the word “*them*” would require another group to be present to who the elders would be referring too. But this group is just not there.

It does not make the best sense to adopt a reading of the text which requires a previous object to the word “*them*” other than the 24 Elders. The use of “*them*” refers to those who are obviously the redeemed out of every “kindred, tongue, people, and nation” and its use requires this same group to have been previously introduce in the preceding verses. So lets eliminate “*them*” as referring to the 4 beasts and the 24 Elders. When we examine all the verses in Revelation 4 and 5 we find that there is not any introduction of this group of redeemed humanity previous to the use of the word “*them*.” This indicates that something is not quite right with this reading. It does not fit the context. It just does not make good sense to say “*them*” when the only ones present are the 4 beast and the 24 Elders.

We must keep in mind that the scenes of Revelation 4 and 5 are in Heaven. This means that if we choose to use the word “*them*” then we are required to have an antecedent to this word in the same passage, that is in the *previous* verses. The only options are the nearest antecedents in verse 8; either the 4 beasts, the 24 elders, or the saints.

We know for certain that the “*them*” cannot be a reference back to the 4 beasts because the 4 beast are angels, and they were not redeemed out of every “kindred, tongue, people, and nations.”

The “*them*” might refer back to “the saints” in verse 8 since that would be the nearest antecedent, but there are no saints present in the throne room! The text is referring to “*the prayers*” of the saints not the saints themselves. If we say that the “*them*” is referring back to the word “saints” we find ourselves forced to explain away that the subject matter of the phrase is not the saints themselves but rather their prayers. This just does not make good sense.

The next closest antecedent to the word “*them*” is the 24 Elders. Now if we adopt the reading “redeemed *them*,” and make the 24 Elders sing about someone other than themselves, but yet we are required by the use of the word “*them*” to choose the 24 elders as the only logical antecedent to “*them*,” then we are forced into making the 24 elders sing about the redemption of “*them 24 elders*” when they are really singing about themselves. Wouldn’t it make more sense for the sentence to read and the 24 Elders to sing “You have redeemed *us*” if the word “*them*” is referring to the 24 Elders anyway?

We are left with the option of retaining the odd and crippled reading of “You have redeemed *them*” (Who? The only answer is the 24 elders, the ones who are singing the song), OR we can go back to the original reading of the KJV “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, *and hast redeemed us to God* by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”

Now in Revelation 5:9, in the very first phrase the word “*they*” could be referring to both the 4 beast and the 24 elders who are singing, or it even could be referring to just the elders alone. This way of looking at “*they*” as referring to the elders *alone* and *not* the 4 beasts would resolve the apparent difficulty of angels singing that they have been redeemed from the earth. Only the 24 Elders then are singing. But since the 4 beasts have censured as do the elders why wouldn’t they also do the singing as do the elders? This seems to make more sense.

But if we are going to say that “*they*” also includes the 4 beast/angels we have to deal with the objection how can angels sing “You have *redeemed us*” if they have never been redeemed? This apparent problem that comes along by using the reading of the KJV is less of a challenge than the problem of trying to explain what is the antecedent to “*them*” by using the NIV.

Since the 24 Elders are redeemed human beings then how can the 4 beast sing the words “You have *redeemed us*” if they have not been redeemed themselves?

First of all we need to remember that the angels play a very close and significant role in the redemption of men. They are ministering spirits who are sent to minister to those who are the objects of redemption, even though they themselves do not have to be redeemed since they have never sinned. The angels have a special intimate relationship with both man and Christ. We cannot separate the angels from the work of salvation even though they are not man’s Savior.

We often sing the words of songs of which we have not literally experienced what the words are describing. This is not unusual to do this. The 4 living creatures are simply joining in on the song because they themselves understand (to some extent) how the redeemed worshipers must feel about the Lamb being the One Who alone is worthy of all glory, honor, and praise. There is no problem whatsoever with the angels joining in the song of redemption when they have had such a direct and intimate involvement in the redemptions of man. The angels are simply singing along with the redeemed, lending their support to the theme of the song. Just because they sing the words “You have redeemed us” does not mean they

are saying that they themselves were literally the ones redeemed. We all have sung songs the words of which were not actually experience. This is such a weak argument to us in objection to the 24 Elders singing “You have redeemed *us*,” referring to themselves.

Now, just because the angels sing these words while not really having been redeemed themselves is no good reason to adopt the view that the 24 Elders are really “representatives from other worlds.” Under the same argument as used about the angels not having been redeemed yet they sing the words of redemption, the representatives from other worlds should be rejected as well, and even more so because they have had no part in even being ministers of salvation—who were sent to minister to the men whom Christ would redeem. The representatives from other world have even less experience about redemption because they have only been observers and not participants as are the angels.

The reading of “Thou hast redeemed *us*” is the best choice that fits with the overall theology of the book of Revelation and the whole of the Bible. The 24 Elders are bowing in worship before God’s throne and the Lamb, singing to the Lamb that He is worthy because with His own blood He has redeemed them from out of all the nations of the earth.

Revelation 4 and 5 describe a scene of worship in Heaven in the Holy Place of the Heavenly Sanctuary at the time of Christ’s arrival in Heaven in 31 AD. Ellen White describes the scene in the book *Desire of Ages*. The following statement has been used to support the idea that the 24 Elders are representatives from other worlds. Those who promote such a view say that Ellen White says the 24 Elders are the “sons of God” or representatives from other worlds. Let’s see what she actually says. Read the following statements and see if you can identify where she says this.

Ellen White quotes Revelation 5:12-13; I will quote her specific statements of these texts with their full context so we can see their true meaning *as she understood them* in their original context.

The Chapter Title itself and its location in reference to the previous chapters, and the subject of those titles, all of these tell us that she is writing about events that took place *at the TIME of Christ ascension to heaven and NOT in 1844. This deals with Christ's ministry of intercession NOT judgment;*

TO MY FATHER, AND TO YOURS (Christ's Ascension in AD 31)

The disciples no longer had any distrust of the future. They knew that Jesus was in heaven, and that His sympathies were with them still. They knew that they had a friend at the throne of God, and they were eager to present their requests to the Father in the name of Jesus. In solemn awe they bowed in prayer, repeating the assurance, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." John 16:23, 24. They extended the hand of faith higher and higher, with the mighty argument, "*It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*" Rom. 8:34. And Pentecost brought them fullness of joy in the presence of the Comforter, even as Christ had promised. {DA 833.1}

All heaven was waiting to welcome the Saviour to the celestial courts. As He ascended, He led the way, and the multitude of captives set free at His resurrection¹ followed. The heavenly host, with shouts and acclamations of praise and celestial song,

¹ These “captives” are obviously those who were resurrected on Sunday morning after Christ was resurrected.

(continued...)

attended the joyous train. {DA 833.2}

As they drew near to the city of God, the challenge is given by the escorting angels,--

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in." {DA 833.3}

Joyfully the waiting sentinels respond,--

"Who is this King of glory?" {DA 833.4}

This they say, not because they know not who He is, but because they would hear the answer of exalted praise,--

"The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in." {DA 833.5}

Again is heard the challenge, "Who is this King of glory?" for the angels never weary of hearing His name exalted. The escorting angels make reply,--

"The Lord of hosts; He is the King of glory." Ps. 24:7-10. {DA 833.6}

Then the portals of the city of God are opened wide, and the angelic throng sweep through the gates amid a burst of rapturous music. {DA 833.7}

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24. {DA 834.2}

The voice of God is heard proclaiming that justice is satisfied. Satan is vanquished. Christ's toiling, struggling ones on earth are "accepted in the Beloved." Eph. 1:6. Before the heavenly angels and the representatives of unfallen worlds, they are declared justified. Where He is, there His church shall be. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Ps. 85:10. The Father's arms encircle His Son, and the word is given, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Heb. 1:6. {DA 834.3}

¹(...continued)

Since it is reasoned that these are the 24 Elders who appear in Heaven before the throne of God and yet Mrs. White says that the resurrected ones were a "multitude," then it stands that the number 24 must be symbolic.

With joy unutterable, rulers and principalities and powers acknowledge the supremacy of the Prince of life. *The angel host prostrate themselves before Him, while the glad shout fills all the courts of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."* Rev. 5:12. {DA 834.4}

Songs of triumph mingle with the music from angel harps, till heaven seems to overflow with joy and praise. Love has conquered. The lost is found. Heaven rings with voices in lofty strains proclaiming, "*Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.*" Rev. 5:13. {DA 835.1}

From *that scene of heavenly joy*, there comes back to us on earth the echo of Christ's own wonderful words, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17. The family of heaven and the family of earth are one. For us our Lord ascended, and for us He lives. "Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25. {DA 835.2}

White, E. G. (1898; 2002). *The Desire of Ages; Conflict of the Ages Series, Volume 3; Desire of Ages* (833). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

All the bold, italic, and underlining emphasis are mine. I have used to these to mark those statements that parallel expressions and concepts found in Revelation 5;

Revelation 5:1-14:

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. 8 And *when he had taken the book*, the four beasts and four and twenty elders *fell down before the Lamb*, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And *they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy* to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 *Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Both the *Desire of Ages* and **Revelation 5** are describing the EXACT SAME EVENTS. Ellen White is absolutely describing the arrival of Christ in Heaven after His resurrection and ascension. It has been

argued that the assembly of the 4 beasts and the 24 elders around the throne of God took place before Christ with those who were resurrected at the time of His resurrection had arrived. Thus, the 24 Elders could not possibly be redeemed human beings that rose with Christ. The following statement is quoted to prove that the 24 Elders were assembled at the throne BEFORE Christ arrived;

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,--all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

Clearly this is the assembly that is there to welcome Christ when He arrives. There are three phrases we should give attention too;

- 1). There are cherubim and seraphim.
- 2). The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled
- 3). The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion

There should be no question about who the Cherubim and Seraphim are. The Seraphim would refer too or include the “four beasts” or “four living creatures.” There could be more than just 4 Seraphim present there, as is stated in Revelation 4 & 5. The Cherubim are most likely those “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands” of angels surrounding the throne.

It should be noted that this group of angels is not heard or seen until after the 4 beasts and 24 Elder fall down before the throne and begin to sing. The point here is that just because they are not heard, seen, nor mentioned previously does not mean that they were not present during the earlier events described in Revelation 4 & 5. It does not mean that they just arrive on the scene at the time of verse 11.

Some have used this line of reasoning or argument to say that Christ and the “captives” He set free at His resurrection *were not present prior too* Revelation 5:5 & 6, where the Lamb appears for the first time in the throne room. Thus, since the 24 Elder *are present* in the throne room *before* Christ arrives, then they cannot be the resurrected saints who rose and ascended with Christ to heaven because if Christ had not arrived yet then neither had the saints, and yet in the throne room the 24 Elders were already there.

At first this argument may seem quite convincing until one considers that the same could be true about the tens of thousands of angels who appear in the throne room but not until verse 11.

Yes, the Lamb is not mentioned before verse 6 but neither were the tens of thousands of angels ever mentioned before the arrival of the Lamb. Are we to reason then that they just arrived when they are first mentioned in Revelation 5:11? Are we to believe that when John is caught up to heaven and God’s throne room that the tens of thousands of angels were not there from the first because he did not mention them?

Or is it reasonable to assume that the angels were present before, but only that they did not come into John’s vision until they begin to sing and worship? When John first sees the Lamb in the midst of the throne are we to assume that the Lamb just walked in at that time? John does not describe the entrance

of Christ into the throne room. He just sees Him there in the midst of the 4 beasts and 24 Elders.

Thus, according to the Biblical record we are not given any information of when Christ and His captives arrive. They are just there. It is presumptuous to assume from the absence of any previous mention of the Lamb prior to verse 6 that He was not there. Revelation 5 mentions the Lamb standing in the midst of the throne but does not mention the “captives” that rose and ascended with Him. Are we to assume that just because they are not specifically mentioned that they are not there? And that they do not arrive until they are specifically mentioned? If we take such a position then the captives never arrive in the throne room, for John never mentions them, ever! But he does mention the 24 Elders. Could it be that these are the captives set free by Christ to be representatives of those who will be resurrected at Christ’s return to earth?

Let’s look at Ellen White’s list more carefully. The list includes 3 phrases;

1.) Cherubim angels, Seraphim angels. We understand who these are.

2.) Next in her list she either is referring to 3 separate groups or she is saying all 3 descriptions are really the one and same group; “the commanders of the angel host, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds.” Either way, she does not use in her list the common term “*twenty and four elders*” used in Revelation 4 & 5. Why does she not use this specific expression?

Some have reasoned that she is referring to them by the use of the phrase “sons of God.” The problem is that she does not make that equation herself.

Let’s not insert into her writings words or meaning she did not use. What is clear is that she does list an assembly of beings that were gathered to welcome Jesus and His captives, but the list does not include the 24 Elders. That is only an assumption that injects into her description.

3.) In this sentence the “heavenly council” is no doubt “the representatives” of those “sinless realms.” This sentence can be seen as referring to the same group as just listed in the previous sentence “the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds,” but only as further description of them, It can also be taken to mean they are another new group in the list, but this is unlikely her intent.

The wording of this sentence appears to give the impression that the “the commanders of the angel host, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds” she is speaking of is the same group as “the heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion.”

In considering her entire list in the above paragraph (DA 834.1), we note that she does list the “sons of God” assembled prior to Christ’s arrival with His captives, but it is a leap of faith (presumption) to assume that she equates the “sons of God” with the 24 Elders, though she never uses any kind of expression which would indicate that she means the 24 Elders. She very well knew what passage of Revelation her vision was dealing with and that the expression “twenty and four elders” was used in the same scene that her and John the Revelator were viewing, but still she never used it! Why not if that is what she meant? Would it be safe to say she never meant to include the 24 Elders in the waiting assembly?

One last point regarding the quotation from DA 834.1. The passage is used out of context to try and make

a case that the 24 Elders are “the sons of God.” But if we consider the very next paragraph we find an interesting detail left out by only quoting the previous paragraph. Let look at both together;

There is the throne, and around it the rainbow of promise. There are cherubim and seraphim. The commanders of the angel hosts, the sons of God, the representatives of the unfallen worlds, are assembled. The heavenly council before which Lucifer had accused God and His Son, the representatives of those sinless realms over which Satan had thought to establish his dominion,—all are there to welcome the Redeemer. They are eager to celebrate His triumph and to glorify their King. {DA 834.1}

But He waves them back. Not yet; He cannot now receive the coronet of glory and the royal robe. He enters into the presence of His Father. He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. He points to the tokens of His triumph; He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming. He approaches the Father, with whom there is joy over one sinner that repents; who rejoices over one with singing. Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had united in a covenant to redeem man if he should be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race. This pledge Christ has fulfilled. When upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished," He addressed the Father. The compact had been fully carried out. Now He declares: Father, it is finished. I have done Thy will, O My God. I have completed the work of redemption. If Thy justice is satisfied, "I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am." John 19:30; 17:24. {DA 834.2}

Please note that while Christ stands in the presents of the waiting assembly (described in the previous paragraph), He has not yet entered the “presence of His Father.” This is a little different than Revelation 5:6 when John sees the Lamb in the “midst” of the throne, which means Christ was obviously in the presence of the Father. What Ellen sees is prior to this. Her description is that Christ enters the assembly who is ready to see Him receive the “coronet of glory and the royal robe,” but He refuses because at this point He has not yet entered the presence of the Father. He then enters the Fathers presence (Revelation 5:6) and what does He do?

“He points to His wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet; He lifts His hands, bearing the print of nails. **He points to the tokens of His triumph;** He presents to God the wave sheaf, those raised with Him as representatives of that great multitude who shall come forth from the grave at His second coming.”

So, Christ appears before His Father for the first time to proclaim His victory and present the "tokens" of His victory. He “points” to them. But where are they? She does not included them in the list of those assembled to great Christ is the previous paragraph, this is sure. But we can be sure as well that they are with Christ when He comes into the assembly before coming into the presence of His Father.

The point here being, that the resurrected saints that rose and ascended with Christ were with Him in the assembly she described, though she does not mention them. She only mentions the presence of Christ. We can be sure that these special saints are right there with Him.

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Attention is first drawn to them when Christ comes into the presence of His Father because Christ “points” to them and presents them as His trophies. Who are these “tokens of His triumph? Clearly they are those who were “raised with Him as His representatives” of the great multitude of resurrected saints that will be raise at His second coming.

Who are these that were "raised with" Christ as representatives of those who will be resurrected at His second coming? They are the 24 Elders who were "redeemed from every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." These are the "wave sheaf" offering presented to God the Father. This was always done in the FIRST month of the year during the Spring Feasts. It was never done on the Day of Atonement in the Seventh month, some 5 months later! Thus, in the Antitypical Feast of the LORD the offering of Jesus' "wave sheaf" HAD to be done when He ascended to heaven in 31 AD and NOT in 1844.

Ellen White is clearly describing the Inauguration of Christ in 31 A.D. and NOT the Judgment in 1844. Now, you either have to believe what she is describing IS NOT what John is describing, that Desire of Ages 831-835 IS NOT the SAME as Revelation 5, OR you have to believe they ARE describing the SAME events. If you are to maintain your new view then you are forced into taking the first option; they are NOT describing the same events. If you do this then why she would use Revelation 5:12-13 out of their contextual meaning, and you must point out that she is actually doing this and that she is not using them according to their original contextual meaning.

that if they were really doing this then the text should be consistent with itself by reading as follows;

⁸ And when he [the Lamb] had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: "He is worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because He was slain, and with His blood He purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. ¹⁰ He has made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." ^{KJV} Revelation 5:8

Let us examine the text more closely. Verse 8 tells us that both the 4 beasts and the 24 elders have harps and censers. The censers are filled with burning incense which represents the prayers of the saints. Verse 9 begins with "And *they* sung a new song." Who are those that sing this new song? It is clear that both the 4 beasts and the 24 elders are the ones who are referred to here.

The fact that they sing "a new song" ties their identity to another group who also sing a new song—the 144,000;

And they sung as it were *a new song* before the throne, and before *the four beasts*, and *the elders*: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. ^{KJV} Revelation 14:3

Please note that both the 24 Elders and the 144,000 sing "a new song." In Revelation 14:3 the 144,000 are the only ones who can sing this new song. They sing it *before* God's throne, the 4 beasts, and the 24

elders. Although in Revelation 5 the beast and elders sang a new song they do not sing the song of the 144,000. It is clear that they are not part of the 144,000 though they have some similarities. The 24 Elders do not in singing along with the 144,000 they just listen.

We note that this throne room scene is very similar to that in Revelation 5, except with the addition of the 144,000. Thus, in Revelation 5 we have those gathered around God's throne; the 4 beasts, the 24 elders, and the thousands of angels. In Revelation 14 we have those gathered around the throne; the 144,000, the 4 beasts, and the 24 elders, (no angels are mentioned here).

The NUMBERS of the elders and the 144,000 show that there is clearly a direct connection between the 24 Elders and the 144,000. They are not the same but they do have a relationship with one another. The NUMBERS 24 and 144,000 are related in that 144,000 is perfectly divisible by 24, that is 24 will go into 144,000 exactly 6,000 times. But the significance here is that number 24 is a mere fraction of 144,000.

Now in order to find the true identity and meaning of the 24 Elders we need to consider the use of numbers in book of Revelation. The 24 Elders are linked to the 144,000 numerically and also to the New Jerusalem.

Though it may seem insignificant there is a link between the singing of a "new" song to the "new" Jerusalem. Both are new. The two new songs are sung in the New Jerusalem, one by the 24 Elders and the other by 144,000. They are both sung before God's throne which is inside the New Jerusalem.

We also find that there are 12 gates to the New Jerusalem and that there are 12 foundations to the New Jerusalem. The total of the 12 gates and the 12 foundations equals 24. This total of 24 is no accident and shows that there is a connection between the 24 Elders and the 12 gates and 12 foundations of the New Jerusalem.

Please note that the 12 Gates and the 12 Foundations are named after the 12 Tribes of Israel and the 12 Apostles. This is no accident either and shows that the number 12 is clearly representative of the human subjects of God's Kingdom. The number 12 is a Kingdom number. God's Kingdom is made up from subjects who have been redeemed from the earth. The 12 Gates and the 12 Foundations are representations of human beings that have been redeemed from the earth by the blood of Christ. The numbers 12, 24, and 144,000 are all related by the fact that they all represent those who have been redeemed from humanity.

The 144,000 have been redeemed "from the earth," "from among men" (Revelation 14:3, 4) and the 24 Elders were redeemed out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The fact that both the 144,000 and the 24 Elders were redeemed from the same place show that both groups can be no other than human beings! They are not "representatives of other worlds." The fact that the number 24 is derived from the number 12-the 12 Gates and the 12 Foundations which are representative of redeemed humanity, and add to this that fact that the number 144,000 is also representative of redeemed humanity, therefore by the use of Biblical numerology in the book of Revelation the 24 Elders cannot be "representatives from other worlds" no matter which translation is used.

Add to all this the fact that the term "elder/elders" is NEVER used in the entire Bible except in referring to human beings. The "sons of God" in the book of Job are not ever called "elders." The

Biblical use of the term “elder/elders” eliminates any possibility of the 24 Elders being “representatives from other worlds.” This precedence set up by the use of elder/elders restricts the use of elder to only human beings. The same is true in the use of the term in the writings of Ellen White, she never call the representatives from the other worlds “elders.”

Since both the 24 Elders and the 144,000 sing a new song, though not the same song, this must mean they have some kind of tie one to another. What is it? Both the 144,000 and the 24 Elders sing the song of redemption. Both have been redeemed! Do the representatives from the other worlds need redemption? Have they ever sinned and been lost? NO! Then they cannot be the 24 Elders.

Greetings Karl,

Thank you for taking the time to look at this passage for me. I do not have Treiyer’s book but certainly would like to see what he says and the quote from Ellen White.

Here is the dilemma that I am having with this Adventist lady;

She believe that the 24 Elders are Angels from other worlds, those that are called "sons of God" in Job 1:6. These 24 Elders represent other worlds and they are the ones who are singing the "new song." These angels sing "You have redeemed THEM out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation... and You have made THEM kings and priest unto our God." So, then these angels are singing about someone else's experience and not their own.

The 24 Elders are NOT men but Angels, thus (she says) the KJV is wrong in translating the passage as "You have redeemed US out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation... and You have made US kings and priests unto our God."

In my current investigation into this interpretation I find this to be quite odd. We must "***rightly divide the word of truth***" (2 Timothy 2:15) which means there is a wrong was to divide the word. The problem is one of how the passage is being divided as well as a manuscript issue.

I have always taken the passage to mean that the 24 Elders men who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. I have never seen the 24 Elders as being "angels" or "representatives" from "other worlds."

If we take the position that the KJV (and the NKJV, and several other translations) as being wrong or mistranslating the passage, we are then face with the following conundrums;

- 1.)** In ALL the Bible NEVER do we find even one instance when angels or representatives of other worlds are referred to specifically as "elders." NOWHERE.
- 2.)** In ALL the Bible "elders" are ALWAYS referred to as "men" NOT women or angles. Is

this right?

3.) The 24 Elders are said to be wearing "crown of gold" and these elders "cast their crowns" before God's throne (this is a definite reference used by Ellen White as referring to human beings that have been redeemed). Angels never receive "golden crowns" of any kind nor is there ever any description of "angels" even wearing a "golden crown. They are only for the "redeemed" from the earth (Revelation 2:10; 3:11; I Peter 5:4; James 1:12; 2 Timothy 4:8).

4.) The significance of number "24" should not be overlooked either. It is a multiple of the Kingdom Number 12; 12 Patriarchs, 12 Apostles = 24. The number 12 is always in reference to "human beings" and never to angels. Why 24 Elders? It would seem that they are firstfruits from both the Old and New Testaments (though this is not explicit but rather a conjecture). Also, the 12 Apostles worked closely with the "elders" as in Acts 15:2,4,6, 22-23.

5.) These 24 Elders are said to be "seated" or "sitting" on "thrones." The only ones who are said to sit on throne are human beings and NEVER angels!

Matthew 19:28; And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus was speaking to the 12 Apostles when He said;

Luke 22:29-30;

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We see here that Christ's kingdom has something to do with these thrones, judgment, and the "twelve" tribes of Israel.

KJV Revelation 4:4; And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

KJV Revelation 20:4; And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Angels DON'T sit on thrones do they? Of course not. Never do ever find an angel seated on a throne (except in 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). Angels do not nor will they ever sit on thrones with Christ. That is only for the redeemed from the earth.

The 24 Elders are therefore a "type" of those who will eventually be redeemed from among men. In the book of Revelation we have 3 groups of the redeemed; 1) the 24 Elders; 2) the 144,000; 3) the Great Multitude. ALL have crowns of gold and white robes. But only the 24 Elders and the 144,000 sing new songs. the new song of the 24 Elders is somewhat different from the new song of the 144,000 because it is said that no man could learn the song of the 144,000 but they themselves.

It is also significant that the 144,000 are a multiple of the 24 Elders; thus making a numerical link between the two. It stands to reason that both groups are made up of redeemed human beings and NOT angels.

6.) The 24 Elders are "clothed in white raiment." Christ, Holy Angels, and the redeemed are all clothed in white raiment or robes.

7.) Who are those that are "made kings and priests?" Revelation 5:10 reads "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." A parallel passage is found in KJV Revelation 1:6; And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

The word translated "US" in Revelation 1:6 is found in every Greek manuscript family. Here are the Nestle Allen 27th Edition, Majority Text, and the Textus Receptus. All read the same.

BNT Revelation 1:6 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ, αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας [τῶν αἰώνων]· ἀμήν.

BYZ Revelation 1:6 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ· αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.

SCR Revelation 1:6 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ· αὐτῷ ἢ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων. ἀμήν.

In Revelation 5:10 in the Textus Receptus it reads almost identically the same; "made US . . . kinds and priests."

Since when are "Angels" ever made "kings and priests?" They are not. So, this is why the Textus Receptus has to be rejected in favor of another text if we are to maintain that the 24 Elders are indeed "angels."

8.) The 24 Elders "reign on the earth." Do angels ever "reign" any where at all, let alone on the earth? NO. The KJV does not allow for these 24 Elders to be anything but human beings. And since they are "Elders" and the elders were always "men" then they cannot be women. The 24 Elders are the representatives of those redeemed from out of every kindred, tongue,

people, and nation, BUT how could they be representatives of the human family IF they themselves are not human but angles? They could not. It is the righteous saint that live and reign with Christ (Revelation 20:4).

9.) If the 24 Elders are indeed "Angles" who are sing a new song about the experience of some other group that were "redeemed out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation" how can this then be "a new song" if the meaning of a "new song" is a song of "experience" which the angels have never experienced? Have any angels be "redeemed?" out of the nations of the earth? Do angels ever receive the golden crown of redemption? Jesus promised to give this golden crown of life only to the human beings (Revelation 2:10; 3:11; I Peter 5:4; James 1:12; 2 timothy 4:8) and never to angels.

10.) Those who "sing a new song" are described elsewhere as the 144,000, which are beyond all doubt human beings and not angles. In Revelation 14:1-3 we read;

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

We should note that the 144,000 "sing a new song" before the "throne," the "four beasts," and "the elders." So, the 144,000 are NOT the elders. Yet they are very similar to them (if we accept the Textus Receptus and Majority Text as equally valid or even superior to the Nestle Allen Text, UBS Text);

The 144,000 are said to "sing a new song" and that no one else could learn that song. The 24 Elders also are said to "sing a new song."

The 1440,000 are those which have been "redeemed from the earth." This harmonizes with the 24 Elders who have been "redeemed. . . out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

Revelation 5:9-10;

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

The 24 Elders do not sing the new song of the 144,000, the 144,000 are the only ones who can learn to sing their song and they sing this song "before" the elders. But, yet the elders have sung a new song also. This I think to be significant in this respect;

The 144,000 are "Firstfruits" to God and the Lamb and so are the 24 Elders. How can we come to such a conclusion?

In 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 we read;

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Christ is called the "firstfruits" of them that have died (slept). But it seems that if this is referring to Christ alone, by Himself, and no one else then should not the text read "firstfruit" (singular) and NOT "firstfruits" (plural)?

I believe that Christ is said to be the "firstfruits" because when He was resurrected from the "dead" He also resurrected others with Him on that very same Sunday morning.

Matthew 27:50-53;

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Who were these that were raised from the dead? If they were raised from the dead then they had to be so by Christ and WITH Christ. Is it too much of a leap of interpretation to see these who rose with Christ the "Firstfruits" as being those firstfruits spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15?

This is what I have concluded. Those that rose with Jesus from the grave on Resurrection Sunday witnessed along with Jesus that He was really alive again from the dead. He did this with Him for 40 days (Acts 1). And when Jesus ascended to Heaven He "led captivity captive" (Ephesians 4:8). I believe Jesus took those from this special resurrection with Him into Heaven as "firstfruits" unto God His Father and these are the 24 Elders.

MY CONCLUSION:

I accept the Textus Receptus and the Majority Text as valid and accurate faithful

manuscripts. There is no reason to believe that there was some kind of conspiracy to corrupt the reading of Revelation 5:9-10 in order to establish some heretical doctrine. The KJV has been attacked as not being faithful to the original text of the Greek language. It is true that the KJV is not faithful to the original Greek text of the modern translations (UBS/Nestle Allen/Westcott and Hort/Tishendorf, and such the like) BECAUSE the KJV is NOT translated from these texts but rather it is translated from an entirely different family of Greek manuscripts-the Textus Receptus.

The KJV did NOT mistranslate the original Greek Text from which it was translated. The Greek word for "US" is actually in the text.

In my investigation into the subject of the 24 Elders I have found that the majority of the evidence is AGAINST the reading into Revelation 5:9-10 that those who are redeemed from out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, those who are made kings and priests, ARE ANGELS.

Rather the 24 Elders are indeed the one who are singing the new song, that these 24 Elders have been "redeemed" from the earth, "out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation," that it is the 24 Elders who have been "made . . . kings and priests."

The 24 Elders sing a "new" song of experience. The Four Beasts (which ARE seraphim angels) pick up the song and join the 24 Elders, and then multitudes upon multitudes join in the song;

KJV Revelation 5:11; And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands

Notice that round about the Throne, the Four Beasts, and the 24 Elders we find an innumerable company of angels who join in the singing and worship of the Lamb and God together with the four beasts and the 24 elders.

Each one of these distinct groups sings their part of the song, but none of them will be able to sing the part of the 144,000.

The four beasts are angels and they along with the 24 Elders, everyone of them, have a golden censer with the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints. I understand this to mean that the 24 Elders are intercessors, priests, and the these beast angels play a significant role in the work of bringing the "prayers of the saints" to the "throne." both the 24 Elders and the Four Beast Angels work together as intercessors. The Angels are not "priests" but their work is to help the priest in bringing the prayers of the saints before God's throne.

This is why I believe that these Four Beasts can join in singing the new song. Because these Four Beast Angels have worked so closely with the 24 Elders before the throne of God interceding in behalf of the rest of the saints that their experience has become one with the experience of the 24 Elders, so much so that these Four Beast Angels (who sustain or carry the very throne of God) CAN SING the New Song; "*Thou art worthy to take the book, and*

to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

This is ***not*** to say that the Four Beast will reign on the earth as kings and priests but rather that they have worked so closely with the 24 Elders that they are virtually one and the same. These Four Beast Angels have been so intimately involved with the experience of the 24 Elders, they know the heart and soul of their experience, that they can "sing with the spirit, and sing with the understanding" (1 Corinthians 14:15). And, so, it is in this sense that these Four Beast Angels can sing to God and the Lamb; "***for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth!"***