

Revelation 5:9-10

*Translated from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised August 2016*

1. FINISHED TRANSLATION:

- **Rev 5:9-10:** and they were singing a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slaughtered, and by your own blood you bought for God [people] from every tribe, language, people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will rule on the earth.”

2. THOUGHT-FLOW DIAGRAM:

- and they were singing a new song, saying,
 - o “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because
 - you were slaughtered,
 - and by your own blood you bought for God [people] from every tribe, language, people and nation,
 - and you have made them a kingdom and priests for our God,
 - and they will rule on the earth.”

3. DETAILED TRANSLATION NOTES:

Rev 5:9	καὶ	ᾄδουσιν	ὠδὴν	καινὴν	λέγοντες	ἄξιος	εἶ	λαβεῖν	τὸ	βιβλίον	καὶ	ἀνοίξει
	conj	3 rd ,pl,p,a,i	asf	asf	partnrm	nsm	2 nd ,s,p,a,i	a,a,inf	asn	asn	conj	a,a,inf
	and	they were singing	song	new	they were saying	worthy	you are	to receive/take	the	scroll	and	to open
and they were singing a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open												

- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive
- ᾄδουσιν: (1) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating the subject of the verb (the four living beings and 24 elders) are performing the action of the verb. (2) **Time** – context suggests a historical present,¹ where the writer is bringing a past event (i.e. a vision he received from God in the past) vividly into the present for the reader. Other commentators understand this to be an iterative present, where the living beings and elders are sinning this over and over.² (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.
- ὠδὴν: (1) **Case** – the accusative of direct object of the verb ᾄδουσιν
- καινὴν: (1) **Case** – a double accusative, completing the thought of the verb ᾄδουσιν
- λέγοντες: (1) **Classification** – an adverbial participle, modifying the verb ᾄδουσιν in a complementary way, completing the thought of the verb. It could be a participle of manner, but I’m sticking with this for right now. (2) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating the subjects are performing the action of the participle. (3) **Case** – in the nominative case to indicate these living beings and elders are the subject nominative of the clause

¹ James Moffatt, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine*, in the Expositor’s Greek Testament, vol. 4 (New York, NY: Hodder & Stroughton, Ltd.), 386. See also Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation: An Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1992), 398, fn. #76.

² “The continuous song is the note of continuous thankfulness and joy,” R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, vol. 1, in International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1920), 146.

Revelation 5:9-10

*Translated from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised August 2016*

- ἄξιος: (1) **Case** – the predicate nominative of the verb εἶ, functioning as the complement of the verb
- εἶ: (1) **Voice** – a simple active voice. (2) **Time** – context suggests a present of existing results. Christ has always been worthy to open the seals, of course, but the focus of the angelic song here is that Christ is worthy because of His finished, perfect work during the incarnation. I chose to not translate it that way (“you are **now** worthy”) to avoid misunderstandings. (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.
- λαβεῖν: (1) **Classification** – an anarthrous, simple infinitive expressing purpose. (2) **Time** – context suggests a present of existing results, just like the verb it modifies.
- τὸ βιβλίον: (1) **Article** – the article is identifying and distinguishing this as the same book being referenced before. (2) **Case** – the accusative of direct object of the infinitive λαβεῖν.
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive.
- ἀνοῖξαι: (1) **Classification** – an anarthrous, simple infinitive expressing purpose. (2) **Time** – context suggests a present of existing results, just like the verb it modifies.

τὰς	σφραγίδας	αὐτοῦ,	ὅτι	ἐσφάγης	καὶ	ἠγόρασας	τῷ	θεῷ	ἐν	τῷ	αἵματι	σου	ἐκ
apf	apf	gsn	conj	2 nd ,s,aor,pass,i	conj	2 nd ,s,aor,a,i	dsm	dsm	prep	dsn	dsn	1 st ,s,sg	prep
the	seals	its	because	He was slaughtered/murdered/ slain	and	you purchased/bought	the	God	by	the	blood	your	from
its seals, because you were slaughtered, and by your own blood you bought for God [people] from													

- τὰς σφραγίδας: (1) **Case** – the direct object of the infinitive ἀνοῖξαι.
- αὐτοῦ: (1) **Classification** – a personal pronoun referring back to the antecedent; the scroll.
- ὅτι: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is expressing the grounds for the preceding statement.
- ἐσφάγης: (1) **Voice** – a simple passive, which indicates the action of the verb is being done to Christ, the Lamb. (2) **Time** – context suggests a constative aorist, indicating a reference to a historical event which occurred in the past. (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive, further explaining the grounds for why Christ is worthy.
- ἠγόρασας: (1) **Voice** – a simple active, which indicates Christ performed the action of the verb by His voluntary and sacrificial death. (2) **Time** – context suggests a constative aorist, indicating a historical event which happened in the past. The NET, Tyndale, KJV and NKJV, however, translated it as a culminative aorist with a perfective aspect (“**have** bought”). There is certainly an argument for this. (3) **Mood** – a declarative indicative.
- τῷ θεῷ: (1) **Case** – a dative of personal interest, indicating for whom the action of the verb was done. Young classifies this usage as a subset of a dative of indirect object (*Intermediate Greek*, 44). (2) **Article** – the article signifies that God is a monadic, “one of a kind” noun.
- [ἡμᾶς]: (1) **Textual Critical** – this pronoun appears in the Textus Receptus and in the Byzantine Text. The external evidence for omitting this word in the UBS-5 is indeed “slight,”³ but the crux of the matter is really in verse 10. There, the external evidence is overwhelmingly in favor of the 3rd

³ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: UBS, 1994), 666.

Revelation 5:9-10

*Translated from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins
Revised August 2016*

person, plural pronoun αὐτούς. Here, you have to pivot and turn to internal evidence. Contextually, which option best explains which pronouns are appropriate? Here are the choices:

- **Textus Receptus:** “hath redeemed us to God . . . and hath made us . . .” (KJV). This makes perfect contextual sense because the pronouns agree. But, the external evidence strongly mitigates *against* the 1st person plural pronoun in v.10.
 - **Byzantine:** “have redeemed us to God . . . and have made them . . .” The pronouns do not agree, and this reading frankly makes the song meaningless and incomprehensible. Robert Thomas makes this point strongly in his commentary.⁴
 - **UBS-5:** “have bought for God . . . and have made them . . .” The first pronoun is omitted, and the second makes contextual sense. This reading also suggests the four living beings and the 24 elders are angelic beings who are not among the redeemed. I went with this option. Metzger, for example, gave omission of the pronoun an “A” grade for probability.⁵ Philip Comfort also preferred omission.⁶
 - Honestly, your interpretation of who the 24 elders are will have a significant impact on whether you include or omit this pronoun. Most modern English translations omit it, but the ISV, for example, went with the Textus Receptus reading for Rev 5:9-10.
- ἐν: (1) **Classification** – this preposition is expressing the means or instrument by which Christ purchased His own by His blood.
 - τῷ αἵματι: (1) **Case** – in the dative case because it is the object of the preposition ἐν. (2) **Article** – a bit stumped on this one. The best I can come up with is that the article particularizes an abstract noun (“blood”), but the possessive pronoun takes care of that. In any event, I left it completely untranslated.
 - Σου: (1) **Classification** – a possessive pronoun which indicates the blood belongs to Jesus.
 - ἐκ: (1) **Classification** – the preposition is expressing spatial extension.

πάσης	φυλῆς	καὶ	γλώσσης	καὶ	λαοῦ	καὶ	ἔθνους	Rev 5:10	καὶ	ἐποίησας	αὐτούς	τῷ
gsf	gsf	conj	gsf	conj	gsf	conj	gsn		conj	2 nd ,s,aor,a,i	apm	dsm
all/every/each	tribe/people	and	language	and	people	and	nation		and	you made	them	the
every tribe, language, people and nation,									and you have made them			

- πάσης: (1) **Case** – in the genitive because it is the object of the preposition ἐκ.
- φυλῆς: (1) **Case** – a partitive genitive, expressing the part of the whole under discussion
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive. I left it untranslated.
- γλώσσης: (1) **Case** – a partitive genitive, expressing the part of the whole under discussion
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive. I left it untranslated.
- λαοῦ: (1) **Case** – a partitive genitive, expressing the part of the whole under discussion
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive.
- ἔθνους: (1) **Case** – a partitive genitive, expressing the part of the whole under discussion.

⁴ Thomas, *Revelation*, 1:410-411.

⁵ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 666.

⁶ Philip W. Comfort, *New Testament Text and Translation Commentary* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2008), 825.

Revelation 5:9-10

Translated from the UBS-5 by Tyler Robbins

Revised August 2016

- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive, further explaining the grounds for why Christ is worthy.
- ἐποίησας: (1) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating Jesus, the Lamb, performed the action of the verb. (2) **Time** - context suggests a culminative aorist, which emphasizes the completion of an action which results in a new state of affairs. This has important significance for the perfect accomplishment of Christ’s work. If Christ work has *already* purchased people from every tribe, language, people and nation, then the salvation of the elect is certain, sure and absolutely guaranteed. It’s a done deal from an eternal perspective, but the results of that finished work are applied in time by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of His elect people, “according to the good pleasure of His will,” (Eph 1:5). The elect have *already* been appointed to be a collective kingdom of saints and priests for Him! Some commentators take this as a futuristic aorist,⁷ perhaps because the next verb is in the future tense-form. I disagree. God has indeed already made all the elect a kingdom of priests (1 Pet 2:4-5), but that function will not be truly fulfilled until they reign with Christ on earth in the eternal state (Rev 21ff). I see no good reason not to take this as a culminative aorist.
- αὐτούς: (1) **Case** – an accusative of direct object, receiving the action of the verb ἐποίησας. (2) **Antecedent** – the redeemed of all ages.
- τῷ θεῷ: (1) **Case** – a dative of personal interest, indicating for whom the action of the verb was done. (2) **Article** – the article signifies that God is a monadic, “one of a kind” noun.

θεῷ	ἡμῶν	βασιλείαν	καὶ	ιερεῖς,	καὶ	βασιλεύσουσιν	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς
dsm	2 nd ,pl,g	asf	conj	apf	conj	3 rd ,pl,f,a,i	prep	gsf	gsf
God	our	kingdom	and	priests	and	they will rule	on	the	earth
a kingdom and priests for our God, and they will rule on the earth.”									

- ἡμῶν: (1) **Classification** – a possessive pronoun. (2) **Case** – a social genitive of relationship, indicating that they (the four living beings and 24 elders) belong to God.
- βασιλείαν: (1) **Case** – a double accusative which completes the thought of the verb ἐποίησας.
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive.
- ιερεῖς: (1) **Case** – a double accusative which completes the thought of the verb ἐποίησας.
- καὶ: (1) **Classification** – the conjunction is a simple additive.
- βασιλεύσουσιν: (1) **Voice** – a simple active, indicating the redeemed will perform the action of the verb. **Time** – context suggests a predictive future. Because of who is singing this song, this is a pretty ironclad promise!
- ἐπὶ: (1) **Classification** – the preposition is expressing spatial position.
- τῆς: (1) **Case** – in the genitive case because it is the object of the preposition ἐπὶ.
- γῆς: (1) **Case** – in the genitive case because it is the object of the preposition ἐπὶ.

⁷ See R. H. Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St. John*, vol. 1, in the International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, UK: T&T Clark, 1920), 148 and Thomas (*Revelation*, 1:402).