

Riverview Baptist Church Wednesday Night Class: A Study in the Book of Revelation – Lesson 4

“The Things Which Will Take Place After These Things...” (Rev. 1:19)

Remember: Chapter 1 gives the past vision of Christ which John saw. Chapters 2-3 give the present Church Age seen in the seven churches. Chapters 4-22 give the future which includes the Tribulation (6-19), the Millennium (20), and Eternity Future (21-22).

Chapters 4-5 are preparatory information for the Tribulation material in 6-19.

A. The Throne in Heaven – Rev. 4:1-11

1. The TIME of the Rapture?

The vision that John saw was a progressive unfolding of what will take place in the future. After the Church Age, at a time which the Bible does not reveal, will be the Rapture. It is the next prophetic event that will take place. There are NO specific indicators as to when the Rapture will take place. Theologically, we refer to this as an IMMINENT event.

How do we know that this is a reference to the rapture? In 4:4 we see twenty-four thrones around the throne of 4:2. What were these wearing?

White GARMENTS and golden CROWNS.

Dispensationally, what is the FIRST group of believers to be judged? CHURCH AGE SAINTS.

When does this judgment take place? After the CHURCH Age which ends with the Rapture. The judgment seat of Christ, which is also

called the BEMA Seat Judgment (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-15).

Therefore, if this part of the vision that John saw is after the Church Age (2-3) and they are apparently already judged (white robes and crowns), then this is a reference to the timing of the Rapture.

There are some who say that these twenty-four are angels in the purest sense. However, we do not see in the Bible angels wearing CROWNS. We do see, however, people wearing crowns.

Notes the crowns that are mentioned in the New Testament:

The Crown of Righteousness – 2 Tim. 4:8

The Crown of Rejoicing – 1 Thess. 2:19

The Crown of Life – James 1:12

The Crown of Glory – 1 Peter 5:4

The Incorruptible Crown – 1 Cor. 9:25

Notice some of the things mentioned in Rev. 4:1:

There is an OPEN door. Compare with John 10:9.

The sound of a TRUMPET. Compare this with 1 Cor. 15:52.

There is a command to “come up here.” Compare with 1 Thess. 4:16.

Rev. 4:2-3 – The Throne of God – The God the Father or God the Son?

Notices the description of the Lord! Remember that this is a SIMILE (a figure of speech showing a comparison using like or as...) The jasper stone can come in many colors, but reds are the most common. The sardius stone is often a deep red colored stone. This is set in the midst of an emerald colored rainbow around the throne. This must have been a glorious sight to behold.

Rev. 4:4-5 – The Twenty-Four Elders

There are some who believe that these are BOTH O.T. and Church Age saints who are resurrected at the Rapture (Scofield; A.C. Gaebelein). This is an OLD dispensational view. There are some who view them as ANGELS (George E. Ladd – Covenant Premillennialist). The New Dispensational view is that these are people of the Church Age. This makes the best sense in light of the context.

4:5 – The image of the throne is powerful. Note the lightning and thunder. There is the imagery of seven lamps of fire (a different Greek word than in 1:19; 2-3). This imagery is representative of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. 4:6-8 – Four Living Creatures – The Greek word ζῶα (zōa) – living beings. These are most likely CHERUBIM (compare with Isa. 6 and Ezek. 10). These beings are around the throne of God. There are some who believe that these beings are representative of the attributes of God (Walvoord). This is not likely in light of 4:8 which indicates that they WORSHIP God.

Rev. 4:9-11 – The Purpose of All that Exists!

This passage contains the clearest statement on why all things exist. The actions that are depicted here are that of WORSHIP. However, the PURPOSE for worship is that God is WORTHY to receive it.

Here is strong evidence that the purpose for which all things exist and for the reason that God does all that He does is for His GLORY. This is the doxological (of or pertaining to glorifying God) perspective of theology.