

Revelation #12**September 18, 2022****Series Title: The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Behold I Am Coming Soon**

Today's message: **Revelation chapters 4 and 5. "Part 1: John is Called up to Heaven," from Revelation 4:1!**

We begin the third section of Revelation, and we call it, "The Revelation of What is to Come (Things yet future...because they haven't happened yet), from Revelation chapters 4-22. Before we begin, I think it is good to establish the interpretative view taken in this sermon series.

I. The Interpretative view of this sermon series on The book of The Revelation

A. First, let me point out that there are four main interpretative schools of thought.

1. The Preterist view

- a) This view interprets all prophecy in Scripture as past history, and all prophecy was fulfilled by A.D. 70 when Jerusalem fell.
- b) The Revelation, according to Preterists, is not predicting future events, but was written by John to encourage believers living in the first century as they suffered persecution under Rome.

2. The Historicist View

- a) This view interprets prophecy in Revelation as an allegory, depicting church history from sometime in the first century to the 2nd Coming of Christ.
- b) Most of the Reformers taught this view.
- c) One of the main problems of this view is that it is heavily "westernized" leaning heavily on the history of the western, (i.e. European) churches, especially in its view of the Roman Catholic Church.

3. The Idealist View

- a) The Revelation is viewed as completely symbolic, teaching timeless spiritual truths.
- b) This view fails the test of interpretation because it ignores the future aspects of many of the prophecies in Scripture and refuses to connect them to actual future historical events.

- (1) In other words, history repeats itself in a never ending cycle of conflict between Christ and Satan, and between believers and the world.

4. The Futurist View

- a) This is the interpretative view we are taking.
- b) This view interprets Revelation 4-22 as “predictive of future end time historical events preceding, during, and after the return of Jesus Christ.”
- c) It is the position taken by most Premillennialists. This view holds a literal 1000 year reign of Christ, followed by the creation of a “new heaven and new earth.”
- d) Within the premillennial view are differing views of *when* the Rapture occurs, not *if* the Rapture occurs.
 - (1) There is the “Pre-Tribulation Rapture” view
 - (2) There is the “Mid-Tribulation Rapture” view
 - (3) And, there is the “Post-Tribulation Rapture” view

B. Comment

1. As we undertake preaching on Revelation 4-22, it is our goal to ground our faith and confidence in person and promises and works of our Great God and the Lord Jesus Christ in our present time, and at the same time rejoice as we anticipate the future unfolding of the prophecies of the Revelation. It should also be noted that we believe that the study of the future events of Revelation will encourage us and spur us on to a deeper love for God in the here and now demonstrated through faithful obedience to Him as we wait for His glorious appearing!

II. An Introduction to Revelation 4 and 5

- A. John is called up to the throne room of heaven and sees the Throne of God the Father in chapter 4. And, in chapter 5, John sees the Lamb of God approach the throne of God the Father and take the scroll from His hand. It is the Lamb, the redeemer, who will initiate the judgments of God in the Day of the Lord.
- B. **Main Principle: Revelation 4 and 5 sets the stage for imminent unveiling of the future historic events from Heaven’s viewpoint.**

1. **Revelation 4:** John is physically called up to the throne room in heaven and witnesses the God the Father on His glorious throne.
2. **Revelation 5:** While witnessing the glory of the Father and His throne, John sees a scroll in the Father's hand and the Lamb of God taking the scroll from the Father's hand in preparation for the opening of the seven seals.
 - a) The opening of the seals is the beginning of the Day of the Lord, which will culminate in the glorious redemption of the earth and God's ultimate and eternal rule.

C. Key points concerning the perspectives of Revelation 4 and 5

1. While we may rejoice at the revelation of the throne of God the Father, we must not miss the meaning of it. 4:5 reveals the ominous "flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder," which should alert us to the realities of the imminent terrors of God's judgments that are forthcoming in Revelation 6-19.
2. Revelation 4 directs us to see God's sovereign right as Creator of heaven and earth to both redeem and to judge His Creation.
 - a) John MacArthur writes concerning the song concluding Revelation 4, "Their song anticipates paradise lost becoming paradise regained."
3. Revelation 5 directs us to the song of the 24 elders as they sing the song of redemption in 5:9-10. This song praises the Lamb for the ultimate victory of the redemption of His people, when He gathers His people "from every tribe and language and people and nations," once and for all!

III. Revelation 4:1-11 The Throne Room of God: Part 1: John is Called up to Heaven (4:1)

- A. (4:1) John is called up to Heaven. "After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'"
1. "After this", or better said, "After these things": *meta tauta* in Gk. is used twice
 - a) Transitional phrase. We were just studying the "things which are" in chapters 2-3 concerning the churches. Remember also, that the letters were actually written to the churches addressed, but are applicable to all churches everywhere down through time.
 - b) So, the first phrase in 4:1, "After these things," at the very least is a literary device pointing us to the beginning of a new vision. And clearly, the first use of the phrase is from John's perspective. Whereas the

second is from the “voice” which spoke to John like a trumpet is from heaven’s perspective.

- c) The second use of the phrase, “after these things,” may carry even greater force by implying that the expected *Rapture of the church* happens at this point in history (Rev. 4:1); between the first and second use of the phrase “after these things”.

- (1) “After this” occurs after the Lord Jesus dictates the letters to the seven churches and just before John sees the throne room.

- (2) Also, there is no other mention of the church on earth until chapter 20.

- (a) But the church does seem to be present worshipping in heaven in Revelation 4 and 5. And we do see John’s vision of the Bride in heaven being made ready for the wedding supper of the Lamb in chapter 19.

- (3) Also, don’t forget that it is because the Lord promised to spare the church of Philadelphia from “the hour of tribulation coming upon the whole earth” (Revelation 3:10) that we, therefore, believe this promise is also far reaching in scope to mean that He will spare His church from the great hour of tribulation, which is coming in Revelation 6-19. Hence, the rapture occurs before The Tribulation.

2. “I looked, and behold,”

- a) It’s like saying, *I saw and perceived! Now, I want you to see what I was seeing!*

3. “a door standing open in heaven!”

- a) It is more accurate to understand the phrase like this: “a door already having been opened.”

- (1) The door through which John passes into heaven to both see the magnificent throne room of God and the things which will soon take place.

- (a) I can’t help but think of Christ as the door. (John 10:9)
Our passage into Heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ.

- (2) Other doors with heavenly significance mentioned in Scripture:

- (a) Ezekiel doesn’t mention a door but says “the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.” (Ez. 1:1)

- (b) At Jesus’ baptism (Matthew 3:16; Lk 3:21)

- (c) At the stoning of Steven as he fell asleep, in Acts 7:56.
 - (d) Peter's vision in Acts 10:11
 - (e) Wow! And the Second coming of Christ! (Rev. 19:11)
- 4. "And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me *like* a trumpet..."
 - a) The voice of the Risen and glorified Lord Jesus here in 4:1 because...
 - (1) ...it is the same voice as in Revelation 1:10
 - (a) We know it is the Lord Jesus in 1:10 because of the description of His glorified presence in 1:10-20
 - b) "Like a trumpet"
 - (1) The voice sounds "like a trumpet"
 - (2) In the Bible when a trumpet sounded it carried a significant message to be *heard* and *obeyed*. Here are some examples:
 - (a) The trumpet announced God's presence at Mt. Sinai.
See Exodus 19:16; 20:18. It caused fear.
 - (b) The trumpet blast announced the year of the Jubilee. All debts were to be forgiven and property returned.
(Lev.25:9)
 - (c) Jericho crashed at the sound of the trumpets.
(Jos.6:4-20)
 - (d) The sound of the trumpet precedes the gathering of the Church at the Rapture (1 Cor.15:52; 1 Thes 4:16).
 - (e) At the gathering of His elect preceding the Millennial kingdom (Matthew 24:31)
 - (f) And several places in Revelation (8:2, 6, 13; 9:14)
 - (3) The voice John heard was like a trumpet, demonstrating the power and authority it commands.
 - (a) What He commands will be done!
- 5. "Come up here..."
 - a) Donald G. Barnhouse comments: John is called "to Heaven that he might look down upon all that should follow from the point of view of Heaven itself...Any true understanding of the course of world events must be based on Heaven's perspective of those events. Further it may be said that here is a *typical* teaching in the very act of John's translation to Heaven for the vision that is to follow...all believers will be caught up to Heaven before the judgment is actually poured out upon the earth."
 - (1) Behold! John serves not only as a witness himself, but also as a *type* or *representative* of the Church being gathered in the

Rapture and brought to Heaven before the judgments of God in Rev. 6-19.

- b) It is worth noting Garland's comparison of similarities between this verse where John is called up to Heaven and the Rapture of the Church.¹

- (1) John hears a verbal command. The Church will hear a verbal command at the Rapture (1 Thes. 4:16).

- (2) Like John, the Church is brought up to Heaven (John 14:1-3; 1 Thes. 4:17).

- (3) John hears a voice *like* a trumpet. That raptured believers hear an actual voice and a trumpet (1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52).

- (4) John hears the command, "Come up here!" and the two witnesses hear the same command at their resurrection (Rev. 11:12)

- c) Also, Garland emphasizes the fact that 4:1 transitions from "the things that are" (regarding the Church) to "the things that are to take place after this." (Rev. 1:19).

- (1) He points out that "these Letters are *full* of the church. Yet 3:22 is the last time the word *church* is used until Rev. 22:16.

6. "...and I will show you...."

- a) What John sees in the Visions in Heaven are things which will be carried out on earth.

- b) And what John sees happening on earth is the carrying out of what he saw in vision he saw in Heaven.

- c) **Wow! God is putting into motion His plan to "take back that which was lost in the Garden and legally regained at the cross."** Garland

- (1) Imagine what this book of Revelation will mean to those people who become believers during the Tribulation! What hope!!

7. "...what must soon take place after these things."

- a) These things *must* take place!

- (1) They **will** take place. God's will is unstoppable. Once it is set in motion everything He has spoken will happen!

- (a) It is Christ Jesus, from whose mouth comes the **sharp broadsword** (Rev.1:16), who will strike down the nations, and rule them with an iron scepter (Rev.19:15)

- b) **Principle: The Will of God is unstoppable!**

B. The Rapture. A few notes.

¹ Tony Garland actually is distilling some points made by Jerome Smith in his comments of Rev. 4:1

1. The word “rapture” means, “to seize” and to “carry off”, a snatching away.
 - a) It often carries the idea of being “rescued from a threatening danger,” which the judgments of God clearly portray. (see 1 Thes. 4:17)
 2. The doctrine is taught in the Bible. We believe the doctrine of the Trinity, the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God, even though the terms are not found in the Bible.
 3. Key points in Scripture concerning the Rapture:
 - a) These are found in a chart presented by Tony Garland:
 - (1) Christ comes for His own (John 14:3; 1 Thes. 5:28; 2 Thes. 2:1)
 - (2) Christ comes in the air (1 Thes. 4:17)
 - (3) Christ claims His bride (1 Thes.4:16-17)
 - (4) It marks the removal of believers (1 Thes. 4:17)
 - (5) Only His own will see Him at the Rapture (1 Thes.4:13-18)
 - (6) It marks the beginning of the Tribulation (2 Thes. 1:6-9)
 - (7) Believers are saved from wrath (1 Thes. 1:10; 5:9)
 - (8) There are no sign preceding the Rapture (1 Thes. 5:1-3)
 - (9) The focus is on the Lord and His Church (1 Thes. 4:13-18)
 - (10)The world is deceived (2 Thes.2:3-12)
 - (11)Believers depart the earth (1 Thes. 4:15-17)
 - (12) Unbelievers remain on the earth
 - (13) His own are taken to the Father’s house (John 14:1-3)
 - (14)The Rapture is imminent– It could happen any time
 - (15) It precedes the career of the man of sin (2 Thes. 2:1-3)
- C. Application for Revelation 4:1
1. The will and the word and the power of God is unstoppable!
 - a) “Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.”
 - b) This should be thrilling to Christians!
 2. The first coming of Christ to earth as the God man provided our justification and redemption.
 - a) We are saved from God’s wrath through Him!
 - (1) “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by His blood, much more shall we be saved by Him from the wrath of God!” (Rm.5:9)
 3. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your only Savior and Lord? Have you willingly surrendered to God’s will, word and power by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ?
 - a) For everyone who has received Jesus Christ, He is your eternal Savior, Deliverer and Comforter!

- b) For everyone who has rejected Christ, He will be the very One who consumes them through His eternal judgment!