

Chapter 4

In Rev.1:19, John was instructed to 'write the things which thou hast seen' (past), 'and the things which are' (present), 'and the things which shall be hereafter' (future).

I. '**After this**' (v.1) (After these things). After the seven dispensations of the 'Church Age' are completed and the last battle has been fought and won by overcomers.

- 'A door was opened in heaven'. Likely a literal door (gate, portal, entranceway). Some have suggested that the 'door' speaks of Christ, Who is the 'way', the 'door' through which believers have come to God for the past 2000 years. (I disagree.) This 'opened door in heaven' is for the entrance of the saints.
- 'A voice as of a trumpet'. No doubt the same voice John heard (recorded in Rev.1:10), and that which Paul mentioned in I Thes.4:16,17.
- 'Come up hither'. Has a two-fold meaning:
 - a. Heaven's invitation to John to 'come up' and view from heaven the coming events upon the earth. **Note:** Some believe John was physically caught up to heaven, as were Enoch and Elijah. (I disagree.)
 - b. This speaks of the 'saints' being caught out (raptured) to escape the coming tribulation upon the earth (Isa.26:20,21).

Rapture. Latin: Raptus (Caught away, or caught up). Greek: Harpazo (Caught up). **Note:** The Bible teaches that the 'Second Coming of Jesus' will be in two stages: (1) Coming 'for His saints' (as a thief in the night) before the 'tribulation'. (2) Coming with His saints at end of tribulation.

- The period between these two appearances of Christ is known as: The Tribulation, The Day of the Lord, The Day of the Vengeances of our God, Time of Jacob's Trouble, Daniel's Seventieth Week, etc.

Until this chapter, there have been 19 references to the 'church' in the world. However, from this chapter unto the end of the Book, the church is never mentioned in connection with the world. The church will be in heaven.

The question has been raised: 'Who will go in the rapture'?

- a) Some believe: (a) It will be only a portion of the 'body of Christ'. **Ex.**, Eve was not made from the entire body of Adam, but from just a portion, a rib. Adam was asleep (a type of the sleeping church of the last days). (b) A certain Christian denomination. (c) All who have at one time accepted Christ as Savior. (d) Only those sanctified. (e) Only those filled with the Holy Ghost. And possibly many others.
- b) Others believe: All those 'in Christ', those 'walking in the light of His Word'. (I agree.)

Note: The Letters to the 7 churches give a good picture as to who is going and who will be left behind. The 'overcomers' are the ready ones. All others are part of the Apostate Church which will enter into the Tribulation.

- 'and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter' (After the rapture of the church).

V.2 'Immediately'. 'In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye' (I Cor.15:52).

The Throne of God is the center of all the activity of the Book. It's referred to 18 times in chapters 4 & 5. Some have said the 'throne of God' is considered to be the fixed center of the universe.

- 'The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and His Kingdom ruleth over all' (Ps.103:19).
- 'One sat on the throne'. No name mentioned and no being described. Some believe John was looking upon the 'unnamable, indescribable Godhead'. (I disagree.) I believe he was looking upon 'God the Father', who, according to Jn.4:24, is a 'Spirit'. For sure, what (or who) John saw was more wonderful than he could express in words.
- 'jasper'. A many-colored stone with purple predominate. Some identify it with the 'diamond'.
- 'sardine stone'. A fiery red. Possibly found near Sardis.
- 'rainbow'. Like an emerald. Although a throne having threatenings and warnings of coming judgment, yet, not a throne of destruction.

Those about the throne (vs.4-11):

- 'Twenty-four seats'. Regal seats, or thrones.
- 'Twenty-four elders'. Not angels, but humans. They are not the 12 patriarchs (Jews) and 12 Apostles only, for they are from 'every tribe, tongue, people, and nation'. They are redeemed men. **Note:** King David appointed 24 elders to represent the entire Levitical priesthood. He divided the priests (probably thousands in number) into 24 courses, each course to serve two weeks at a time in the Temple. They could not all come together at one time, but when the 24 elders met in the Temple precincts in Jerusalem, the whole priestly house was represented.
- Too. elders were appointed in the New Testament churches to rule and represent the entire church (Titus 1:5). The elders mentioned here in this verse seem to be representative of the entire heavenly priesthood - all the redeemed.
- 'white raiment'. The righteousness of Christ. A priestly order.
- 'crown of gold'. As kings and priests, the church will rule with Christ (Rev.2:10).
- 'lightnings and thunderings and voices'. A reminder that judgment is getting ready to break upon the earth.
- 'seven lamps of fire'. Not candlesticks, nor lamps, but torches held high (the seven Spirits of God preparing for battle).

Four Beasts (Living Creatures).

- A. Some believe them to be angelic beings, created for the purpose of calling attention to God's glory and holiness (Isa.6).

From Scripture, we know they:

- a. Call attention to the holiness of God (4:4-8).
 - b. Fall down in worship before the Lamb of God (5:8-10).
 - c. Sing and play on harps of gold (5:8-10).
 - d. Officiate in a priestly capacity (5:8-10).
 - e. Call for the four horsemen to 'Come' (6:1-8).
 - f. Give the 7 vials to the 7 angels (15:7).
- B. Others believe the 24 elders represent the Old Testament saints, and the 4 Living Creatures represent the New Testament saints (the Church).
- C. Still others believe the 'living creatures' are glorified saints of the highest order (Rev.3:21), because:
- a. They sang the song to the Lamb: 'Thou redeemest us to God by thy blood (5:9).
 - b. 'Eyes before and behind' - have great perception and vision.
 - c. 'lion'. A characteristic of Christian courage.
 - d. 'calf' (oxen). Beast of burden. Signifies humility.
 - e. 'man'. God's masterpiece of creative work; made in His likeness. The highest ideal of wisdom and intelligence.
 - f. 'eagle'. Royal bird. Capable of rising above the storms, and builds its home on high.

Living Creatures: Each having 'six wings' (Isa.6).

- a) With two he covered his face - humility.
 - b) With two he covered his feet - meekness.
 - c) With two he did fly - activity, work, service.
- 'Full of eyes within' - inner vision.

Note: Those Christians, who are ready for the Lord's return, are the keenly conscious of the fact that it is near at hand. They are 'watching and waiting'. Too, they take the lead in worship, with the elders following.

- 'Cast their crowns before the throne' (v.10). The 'elders' lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus as an act of submission and worship. He is worthy!
- Worship is the activity of heaven; the created worshiping the Creator. That's why true Christians love to fellowship and worship while here on earth.